HOLBROOK LIBRARY
PACIFIC SCHOOL
OF RELIGION

The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

Hoover Rupert:
Visions That Disturb Contentment

Hillyer H. Straton • Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Jaroslav Pelikan • That the Wise Men Might Come Again

James S. Thomas • Life's Redeeming Pace

Harold E. Fey • The Center Does Not Fail

Donald E. Overlock • I Am the Church

RICHARD E. WENTZ
HAZARD IN LITURGICAL RENEWAL

VOL. XXXII, No. 1

JANUARY 1961

The Pulpit

Founded 1929 by Charles Clayton Morrison as a journal of contemporary preaching.

KYLE HASELDEN, Editor

HAROLD E. FEY, *Contributing Editor*

MARTIN E. MARTY, *Contributing Editor*

MARJORIE L. BROWN, *Copy Editor*

LEONARD S. MEYER, *Business Manager*

Editorial Associates

Conrad Bergendoff, Pres., Augustana College
Oscar F. Blackwelder, Reformation Lutheran, Washington, D. C.
Harold A. Bosley, First Methodist, Evanston, Ill.
George A. Buttrick, Harvard University
Henry Hitt Crane, Pastor Emeritus, Central Methodist, Detroit
Edwin T. Dahlberg, Delmar Baptist, St. Louis
Russell V. DeLong, Pres., Pasadena Nazarene College
Theodore P. Ferris, Trinity Church, Boston
C. Willard Fetter, First E.U.B., Dayton
Jack Finegan, Pacific School of Religion
O. A. Geiseman, Grace Lutheran, River Forest, Ill.
E. S. Hjortland, United Ev. Lutheran, Oak Park, Ill.
E. G. Homrighausen, Princeton Theological Seminary
Ernest Marshall Howse, Bloor St. United Church, Toronto
William H. Hudnut, Jr., Third Presbyterian, Rochester
Gerald Kennedy, Bishop, Los Angeles Area, Methodist Church
Harold L. Lunger, Brite College of the Bible, Fort Worth
George A. Mastrantonis, St. Nicholas Eastern Orthodox, St. Louis
Benjamin E. Mays, Pres., Morehouse College
Robert J. McCracken, Riverside Church, New York
Frederick M. Meek, Old South Church, Boston
Roy Pearson, Dean, Andover Newton Theological School
Harold C. Phillips, Brown Visiting Professor of Homiletics, Union Theological Seminary, New York
James A. Pike, Episcopal Bishop of Calif., San Francisco
Liston Pope, Dean, Yale Divinity School
Edward Hughes Pruden, First Baptist, Washington, D. C.
Paul M. Robinson, Pres., Bethany Biblical Seminary
Frederick W. Schroeder, Pres., Eden Theological Seminary
Ralph W. Sockman, Christ Methodist, New York
Alan Walker, Supt., Central Methodist Mission, Sydney, Australia

35 cents single issue.

$4 a year in U.S.A. and Canada.

$4.50 foreign.

Copyright © 1960 by the Christian Century Foundation. All rights reserved under the International Copyright Union, the Universal Copyright Convention and the Pan-American Copyright Convention. Second-class postage paid at Chicago, Ill., and at additional mailing offices.

Published monthly by the Christian Century Foundation, 407 S. Dearborn St., Chicago 5, Ill. HArrison 7-5380.

CONTENTS: JANUARY 1961

SERMONS

Visions That Disturb Contentment ..... *Hoover Rupert* 4
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year .. *Hillyer H. Straton* 10
That the Wise Men Might Come Again .... *Jaroslav Pelikan* 12
Life's Redeeming Pace ..... *James S. Thomas* 16
The Center Does Not Fail ..... *Harold E. Fey* 18
I Am the Church ..... *Donald E. Overlock* 21

ARTICLES

Hazard in Liturgical Renewal ..... *Richard E. Wentz* 7
The Minister as Preacher ..... *John E. Skoglund* 24

FEATURES

Pulpit Post 2
Editorial 3
Prayers 6, 9
The Mourners Bench 15
Thoughts on Preaching . 23
Book Reviews 30
Pulpit Calendar 31
Trading Post 31

PULPIT POST

Kish Is Married But It Wasn't His Baby

SIR: When I turned to the eminent Dr. Kish and his comments on the baby bawler (October) my reactions were as follows:

1. Why didn't he pick the baby up?
2. Was he a married man and did he use the church to escape the discipline of family living? Did he tell every one how to raise his family and throw up his hands in despair over his own?
3. Was the Holy Spirit operating through the baby? Perhaps the baby was preaching the better sermon, and to Professor Kish at that, saying something like this: "Hobab, your preparation this week was good, you were not lazy, but you have a tendency to think that the Kingdom will come about by your singlehanded efforts when the department of conversion belongs to me."
4. Reading the article called to mind a friend who is an Anglo-Catholic of the 'nth degree. He spent many years working on the perfect liturgy and finally he had it all worked out. Yet the only person who celebrated mass on Sunday was the priest.

Babies belong in the family pew on Sundays. I have known many who were brought up in junior churches and who wear attendance cross and crowns for church school, who never darken the church doors later. Maybe the parents got out of the habit because Dr. Kish, by his scowls, made the parents feel unwelcome.

RICHARD D. ELDRIDGE
Congregational-Christian Church
Freehold, New York

The Smaller the Letters The Bigger the Church

SIR: In his thoughtful article, "A Protestant Looks at Catholicism" (Oct.), Theodore Ferris helps clarify a number of relationships between Roman Catholics and Protestants.

However, he commits an error himself when he accuses the Methodists of professing a creed which expresses belief in the Holy Catholic Church. If he will refer to *The Discipline of The Methodist Church* and *The Methodist Hymnal,* where the Apostles' Creed is quoted, he will find "I believe . . . in the holy catholic Church." It is not of small significance that "holy" and "catholic" are not capitalized in this creed. When the words are capitalized, to the average reader they mean "Roman Catholic," which certainly is not the meaning to the Methodists. They do, however, claim to be a part of the church universal.

REUBEN A. TANQUIST
The Methodist Church
Highmore, S. D.

The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

VOLUME XXXII JANUARY 1961 No. 1

The Myths Which Dilute the Gospel

THE PERIL confronting the preaching ministry today has been variously defined. Most of those definitions could be reduced to one sentence: the gospel has been totally repudiated by those people who are outside the church; it has been partially accepted by those who are inside the church. Of the two the second undoubtedly inflicts the more severe wound upon the Body of Christ. There is little if any possibility that we shall be able to convince the dark, angry men of our day that the gospel of Christ is relevant to their need, that it answers the questions which they ask and solves the problems with which they wrestle so long as they see in the people who profess that gospel so little evidence of its effectiveness.

To brush off the skeptics, the cynics, and the nihilists of our time with slurring remarks about their intelligence or their conscientiousness will prove a tragic mistake. It is probable that many of them see deeper into us than we do into them and that what they discover there prevents any serious consideration of Christianity as a live alternative to the sober and heroic despair which they profess. Their darkness may be more congenial to the realities of life as they see them than is our light. To dismiss them on the basis of their morality is to betray an ignorance of the chaste, disciplined, dedicated lives which are sometimes found among the nihilists. To disregard them as men without influence upon the cultural trends of our time is to court disaster for the church, for the kind of society which the church envisions, and for the kind of man which the church desires. Men who see nothing before them but "A Long Day's Journey into Night" will not only be able to gather many followers but will also penetrate numerous Christian minds with the terror and the dread for which the dark philosophies offer no solution. In such men there is a seemingly obstinate resistance to all overtures by the Christian gospel, but theirs is not a case which permits us to brush the dust off of our feet and pass them by. Whatever else we may say about them they are in earnest in their reading of life. A flippant repudiation of the gospel can be disregarded; one which conscientiously examines the possibilities offered by that gospel and sincerely rejects them becomes a rebuke and a judgment which the church cannot afford to ignore.

Therefore, with an eye always alert to those who are on the outside of the church and with an ear cocked to hear what they have to say, we must turn our primary attention to those who are on the inside of the church. To convert the unconverted remains our primary ministerial function but this certainly does not mean that our primary duty is to turn non-Christians into the kind of Christians most Christians are. The mission of the church now has its widest frontier within the boundaries of the Christian community. The mission *of* the church has become a mission *to* the church. "The problem," said Kierkegaard, "is, being in a certain sense a Christian, to become a Christian." At no time has that need been greater than now. The problem for Christians is, being in a definite sense pagan, to cease being pagan.

To say of the 20th century, American church member that he is in a definite sense pagan, that he has only partially accepted the gospel, is to say that his gospel has been diluted by the myths of the modern mind. This is a general indictment which must not be left standing in its vague generality. What do we find when we break this charge into a bill of particulars? No adequate dissection of this generality can be accomplished in this limited space, but we can begin and in future issues continue the analysis.

The first myth which is today diluting our gospel has in recent months been sharply analyzed, vigorously condemned, and variously labeled. We may call it *Religionism,* by which we mean that Christianity has been rounded to a universally acceptable shape by cutting off all doctrinal and disciplinary corners and edges. The result is a religion easily professed, a religion which tints all areas of our common life with the pastels of institutional religion but leaves out the light and shadow of pleasure and pain, ecstasy and sacrifice, duty and the devil, the crown and the cross. Nothing needs to be added here to the growing bulk of literature which condemns religion-in-general. But *Religionism* is merely one side of a many-sided problem. If we are to take the measurement of our partial acceptance of the gospel we must note in more detail the diluting effects which *Eclecticism, Sentimentalism* and *Ecclesiasticism* have upon our faith.

KYLE HASELDEN

Visions That Disturb Contentment

By Hoover Rupert

And when he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on . . . concluding that God had called us. . . . Acts 16:10

TO experience "visions that disturb contentment" is the mark of an educated man, according to President Leopoldo T. Ruiz of Silliman University in the Philippine Islands. By this definition, the Apostle Paul was an educated man. The insights which the scriptures give to his life and ministry indicate that Paul was never content to sit tight in complacent satisfaction with himself and his world. After his vision of Christ on the Damascus road, Saul of Tarsus became the discontented apostle of Christ who could never be comfortable in the face of the needs of a world crying for Christ and the Christian gospel.

Paul had left his life of Pharisaism behind, respectable and commendable as it was, to become a campaigner for Christ. He moved from place to place in the Palestinian area bringing the news of the resurrection and calling men to Christian discipleship. One day he came to a stopping place. The doors to the expansion of the Christian church into Asia appeared to be closed to his efforts. But at the same time there came the vision of the man of Macedonia calling Paul to expand the church in the direction of Europe. He considered this to be the Spirit of God speaking to him and calling him to go over to Macedonia and bring Christ to the people there. Apparently Luke had joined him there at Troas, for the story here moves into the first person plural. Luke says of this crucial moment in the lives of early Christianity, "And when he [Paul] had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on . . . concluding that God had called us. . . ." Here was a vision that disturbed any contentment Paul and his friends might have had about the success of their mission thus far. It would be easier to stay among the friends they had made and shore up the structure of the churches and societies of Christians already organized. However, driven by this divine discontent in his heart, Paul set out to capture new worlds for Christ.

Well, who does not know the feeling of discontent and dissatisfaction? I heard a businessman recently bemoaning that his gross sales this year would not exceed last year — which was his greatest sales year in history. To achieve the hill is to see the mountain beyond with its beckoning lure of the unattained.

Paul's condition was not the discontent of anxiety which many of us know firsthand. To be alive in an age like this is to experience tension and anxiety. To seek to keep up with life in these times is to find ourselves pressing and pushing ahead constantly. Dean William R. Bean of the University of Iowa Medical School, in speaking to a medical society meeting, remarked that the physician's activities today are "reminiscent of those of a non-tranquilized grasshopper with epilepsy learning to do the cha-cha-cha on the runway of a busy airport." Many of us who are not in medicine can testify that life for us has a similar reminiscence!

The Mark of Greatness

To be sure, most of us are discontent with the tasks undone and the challenges unmet. And when this happens, a divine dimension enters into our experience of dissatisfaction. This is the first step toward the potential greatness that lies along the path of every human life.

To dream great dreams is a normal part of man's experience from childhood on. The ancient prophet speaks to our condition when he writes, "your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions" (Joel 2:28). But too many times we keep vision on the fanciful level of childhood. Daydreams may serve only to build air castles. That which is potentially a vision that should arouse us to action then becomes a tranquilizer that keeps us peacefully asleep in a world that demands alertness and action.

HOOVER RUPERT *became senior minister of First Methodist Church, Ann Arbor, Michigan, in February, 1959, leaving First Methodist Church, Jackson, a pastorate he had held for nine years. The Ann Arbor church, adjacent to the University of Michigan campus, has a resident membership of 2,400 and serves the more than 2,000 Methodist students enrolled in the university. Writer of a weekly syndicated column, "The Youthful Accent," and regular contributor to various religious publications, Dr. Rupert is also the author of several books. The most recent, a book of sermons entitled* And Jesus Said . . . , *was published by Abingdon Press in April, 1960.*

The mark of greatness is seen in the life that accepts the dynamic drive of man's dreams. In Carl Sandburg's book, *The People, Yes,* America's expressive word-artist writes, "If the big arch of the sky were paper and the violet depths of sea were ink, I could never live long enough to write the dreams of man and the dynamic drive of those dreams."

The Apostle Paul is but one example of great men who have been empowered by this dynamic drive of vision. Paul's big experience came on the Damascus road, but notice that throughout his life from then on there is record after record of his sensitive spirit responding to the call of God. Here at Troas he sees the vision of the Macedonian need for the gospel and immediately he responds by seeking to go on. His conclusion was that this was the authentic call of God upon his life. Who can be content to gloss over such a call and continue business as usual? Not the man of greatness.

It is this eternal dissatisfaction which has led men of greatness to the heights of great endeavor where discontent will prod forever, and the lure of the unattained rings its everlasting changes.

We thrive in all fields of human experience today because the everlasting Whisper has penetrated into the souls of men of greatness. We enjoy life and we profit from the visions that have caused such men to accept the challenge of their discontent. The field of medical science can illustrate the point which could be illustrated from scores of fields as well. I am particularly sensitive to my indebtedness to the medical profession today because of what they have done for my family in recent weeks.

No one is more aware than I of the power greater than the surgeon which is present at moments of crisis. And the mark of medical greatness includes a surgeon's sensitivity to that divine power which works with him for our good. Having seen the vision of God's gift of the power to heal, such a man of greatness "immediately seeks to go on" in search of larger vision and greater skill. Thank God for all such who accept the challenge of discontent with achievement thus far, and move on in response to the everlasting Whisper of the eternal!

Someone is thinking that he or she does not have the ability or training to be a great surgeon, or a great statesman, or a great educator. This is probably quite true for most of us. But the dynamic quality of the truth we examine today is that every man can consciously share the experience of a divine discontent, that every man can allow his highest moments to command his life.

You who are embarking on your career as university students for the first time or who have returned to brighten your own light at the lamp of learning, can qualify for greatness in this regard. Here is your opportunity to accept the academic disciplines which can develop your personal God-given talents and capacities in your area of vocational choice, and thus further the dream in your own heart!

You who find yourselves out in the mainstream of life with its baffling frustrations, with its disillusioning experiences which seem to give the lie to your youthful dreams of great achievement — what does this say to you? It says that no life is lived in vain, that no life is so far from greatness that a person has nothing to return to the society that has produced him. We dramatize the great achievements of leaders in the various areas of life and sometimes miss the fact that they are cut from the same goods as you and I.

God has a place for you that none other can fill. Whatever is to be done of God by you and your life will not get done if you do not do it! Accept the place where you stand in life as the holy ground of your opportunity to fulfill God's expectations of you. For the turning point in any life, whatever its age or station, comes when, Moses-like, we sense the sacredness of the spot we occupy in the scheme of things because we are there and God is there calling us.

How Qualify for Such Greatness

There are steps we can take that will help us meet the challenge to greatness in our own situation. First, *we need to cultivate the power to envision our share in bettering the world.* This can be done by an honest evaluation of our situation. What are my interests and aptitudes and capacities? How can they be used for God in the place where I am? For where my capacities and abilities confront the needs of the world, there I am called of God to serve. Reading the scripture regularly will help sensitize me to God. Reading at least one good biography a year will help me see how someone else has faced his situation.

Second, *we need to believe that God can speak to us, that he can use us and our talents, and that he does call us to our particular place of service.* But you say that what you wanted to do you cannot do, the vocation you want to enter does not open up for you. Dr. Fosdick once said that God never closes a door on a person without opening a half-dozen other doors. A young man known to many of you, who sat where you sit this morning, faced a most promising career in engineering. Indeed, he was already several years along in his chosen profession. But that young man felt God was calling him to something else — some church-related vocation. So, after prayerful consideration and hours of consultation with his spiritual adviser, this young man left his chosen field and entered theological seminary. This last June he stood with 35 other young men at this very altar and was ordained into the ministry of the church. This is not to imply that engineering is not a worthy Chris-

tian vocation or that all engineers should enter the ministry! Rather, it is to suggest that God does speak to us and that the call of God comes to every one of us. If we are sensitive to that call, he will lead us into the paths of service where we can happily and effectively serve him.

Finally, *we need to be willing to be used for the fulfillment of the vision.* The old axiom that "many are called but few are chosen" might well be adjusted a little in this context. "All are called but few are willing to be chosen." Someone here today is disturbed by the vision which keeps coming into his mind that something less desirable to his comfort and convenience is the call of God for him. It may be in the field of vocation. It may be in the field of human relationships. God provides the vision and the call, but you alone dictate the answer you make to that call.

Included in my reading this summer was Hermann Hagedorn's biography of Albert Schweitzer. The details of his life were not new to me for I have read much of Schweitzer — and none can read too much of this man who in many respects is the greatest man of this century. But once again, I was captured by this man who personifies what we are talking about. Here is a man whose contentment continually is disturbed by the vision that comes from God. You know his story well. Proficient in the field of music, of theology, of biblical interpretation, he entered medicine that he might give his life in service in Africa. For more than fifty years he has been seeking to move against the darkness of disease and pain among a neglected people. Today the world beats a path to the door of the hospital at Lambaréné because Schweitzer follows in the authentic line of greatness initiated by the apostle Paul twenty centuries ago. The ancient record can be duplicated word for word. "And when [Albert] had seen the vision, immediately he sought to go on — concluding that God had called him."

So God calls you and me today. For in the words of the ancient prophet Habbakuk, "Still the vision awaits its time; it hastens to the end — it will not lie. If it seem slow, wait for it; it will surely come."

And it will surely come to you wherever you are. For it is of God.

Prayer for the Year's End

O GOD of the ages, the pages of another year have been torn from the calendar of our lives and cast into the wastebasket of time. One year ago they hung before us clean and uncluttered, holding in their crisply numbered days the golden gift of time. And now those days of promise have turned into memories.

For some of these memories, O God, we are deeply thankful. Thankful for the moments of love and joy and friendship that we have shared. Thankful for the flashes of success that have shown the stamp of thine approval upon our efforts. Thankful for the achievements that have brought a sense of real worth to our lives. And most thankful for the unnumbered times during the past year when we thought we were alone, then suddenly felt thy hand upon our shoulder.

In gratitude to thee we have transcribed these memories from the discarded calendar and recorded them in our permanent Book of Life.

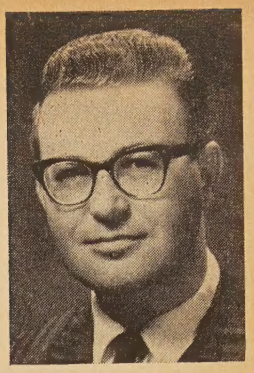
But for some of our memories, O God, we are deeply ashamed. Those moments of pride and prejudice when we thought to elevate ourselves by stepping on someone else. Those times of selfish indifference when need sat by our side and pleaded with us for help or understanding. And we wish we could forget those instances of moral cowardice when we faced a moment of truth in the shifting battle of life and shielded ourselves with slippery words or embarrassed silences.

For these and all our sins, O Gracious Father, we are genuinely ashamed. Let these memories be consumed along with the used calendar pages in the purifying fire of thy forgiveness and love. Please, God, remember them against us no more.

In the sacrament of Holy Communion, Our Father, bring us to thy table as clean and full of promise as the unsullied pages of the New Year. In the sacred mystery of the Lord's Supper, O God, make us truly one with him who will guide and direct all our tomorrows.

In this time of beginning again, O Lord, "So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom" through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen. — *Leon E. Raines, Point Loma Community Church, San Diego, California.*

While Liturgy Flourishes We Must Examine the Perils of Liturgicalism



Hazard in Liturgical Renewal

By Richard E. Wentz

SOME measure of liturgical interest has by now penetrated into almost every ecclesiastical tradition. Accordingly, this is the time for clarification; this is the time for an awareness of certain perils in liturgical renewal. For many individuals and churches the liturgical revival has come all too easily. Renewal has often meant the reconstruction of the Order of Service on the Sunday morning bulletin. The assembled people have remained an aggregation of individual worshipers taking a break from the cares of the household, the routine of the office, the toil of the fields. They are not consciously the thankful family of "all sorts and conditions of men." We must ask whether, fundamentally, the people are capable of turning aside the subjective pattern of several centuries in order to understand themselves as the community of the redeemed. We must ask whether they can understand the nature of the community even when separated in time and space, and yet comprehend their gathering together for the common action of thanksgiving as the prototype of their every act of living. Until this happens, there is no real liturgical renewal.

One hears many statements by clergy and laity which reveal a basic misunderstanding of liturgy. Statements like "Well, I'm not very liturgical" or "George has a very liturgical church" are usually indications of a basically erroneous and obsolete understanding of liturgy. Remarks of this nature are part of the residue of the nineteenth century liturgical controversies. Liturgy today does not have the same meaning as it apparently had in the context of the old "high church" versus "low church" altercations. If we wish to speak constructively of liturgical renewal, we shall have to overcome this semantic entanglement and converse in terms of the newer and more profound understanding of liturgy. The debate is no longer over form or lack of form. Liturgy is the worshiping action of the whole congregation. To a degree every church is liturgical. The question is, is it *sound* liturgy? Is it true to the nature of the church or is it expressive of a pious "court of honor"? Is the liturgy truly expressive of the community of the *justified?* Is the worship *consciously* liturgical so that both clergy and laity recognize the ingredients of participation and response which are both historical and contemporary?

It is important to see that the issue of liturgical renewal must be creative and dynamic. It is not a matter of formalism. This point is amply illustrated by the fact that Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Anglican churches are as much involved in the current liturgical movement as is the rest of Christendom. We might go so far as to say that creative liturgical interest and conversation offers one of the most fertile fields for the cultivation of vital ecumenical encounter in our day. That which is simply formal may not be at all authentically liturgical.

In order to provide a foundation for a more significant understanding of the whole problem of liturgical renewal, it might be well to distinguish between liturgical traditionalism and liturgical dynamism. Such a distinction can serve two purposes. It can be a comprehensive and all-embracing indication of the basic hazard in liturgical renewal. It can also serve as a means of evaluating the many signs and symptoms of contemporary liturgical interest. Liturgical traditionalism is the almost dogmatic fascination with words, structures, and forms of worship that have commended themselves to the Christian community in its historic and classic past. Liturgy in this context becomes equated with form and formalism. Liturgical dynamism, on the other hand, is derived from the rediscovery of the nature of the Christian faith and the church. It is a dialectical expression of Christianity as a worshiping community, being both loyal *to* and critical *of* the history and traditions of worship. While liturgical traditionalism is concerned with a return to

RICHARD E. WENTZ *is pastor of Trinity Church, Mercersburg, Pennsylvania, and school minister at The Mercersburg Academy. This article is an amplification of a report made by Mr. Wentz to the annual meeting of The Mercersburg Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church (United Church of Christ) as chairman of the Synod's Committee on Liturgics.*

the rituals, forms, and expressions of a hallowed age, liturgical dynamism is concerned with giving *shape* to the worship of the Christian community as that community is constituted historically and as it gives expression to its own response to the essential Christian faith. It is dynamic because it is in living conversation with our age. It is dynamic because it is both reformed and catholic, and interested in the active participation of the community. The soundness and wisdom of historical liturgical forms are not denied. Liturgical dynamism is not iconoclastic. However, it recognizes that eucharistic worship was the result of a process of development that emerged from the primitive Christian milieu. This knowledge becomes the basic principle by which dynamism seeks to be relevant. The value of currently used liturgies is acknowledged, but liturgical dynamism is aware that there may be fallacies in existing liturgies — fallacies arising out of a too self-conscious catholicism, out of unfaithfulness to the principle of development, and out of a misunderstanding of the original purpose behind the evolution of sound liturgical expression.

There are churches which have always used carefully structured forms of worship. They have been loyal to historic patterns and literary modes. There is danger that these churches shall become smug when we speak of liturgical renewal. When we remind them of the hazardous obscurity of a liturgical traditionalism, we are suggesting that they may not be truly liturgical any more than the so-called "free churches." These churches must consider the possibility that the traditional liturgical language may need to be revised in order to speak for the congregations of the church in a technological culture. The dynamic nature of true Christian liturgy requires the discerning consideration of such a possibility. Of course, it is not only a matter of language. The rationale of currently accepted liturgies may have to change in the face of scholarly developments in the understanding of the nature of the church and the historic basis of the earliest liturgical patterns.

Another danger in the contemporary "era of good liturgical feeling" is that the question of aesthetics shall become too prominent. There are those for whom liturgy is primarily a matter of "right" actions, beautiful vestments, eloquent words, and magnificent settings of music and architecture. This emphasis may remove from the life of the people that which is fundamentally the "work of the people." Often a presupposed idea of beauty and the desire for aesthetic satisfaction begin to usurp the sovereignty of God. This aesthetic worship strives for the expression of Greek conceptions of beauty and may not be at all true to the biblical foundation of Christian liturgy. For that biblical pattern is concerned primarily with the community's response to God as he is dynamically known in history. Liturgical traditionalism is partially responsible for the aesthetic twist since it seems to insist on the beauty of dress, words, and actions not congenial to this age but attractive to it. A truly liturgical dynamism will not be caught in this aesthetic trap. It will recognize and cherish aesthetic values, but will never allow them to become the fundamental issue. This aesthetic temptation is not only the nemesis of the more classical and catholic Christian churches. The extremely humanistic and nonbiblical strain of our culture has expressed itself in certain "religious societies" and "Pelagian" churches. These groups have produced a subjective and innocuous form of sophisticated aesthetic worship which often calls itself "liturgy." This is not liturgical dynamism because it appears as a "sport" in the historical process of liturgy and church. It often expresses mere sentiment with no biblical or historic profoundity, being neither catholic nor reformed.

It has become obvious in recent years that church architecture has been influenced by the revival of liturgical interest. There are certain deplorable symptoms of this effect. Many congregations have erected church buildings with divided chancels and altar-tables. While this might be a welcome indication of the recovery of the church as a worshiping community, such, unfortunately, is not the case. In most instances, the altar-table is not truly the center of the offered thankful life of the church. It was built into the scheme either because no real theological inquiry took place or because it had become "the thing to do." In many of these newly-appointed buildings "anything goes" as far as the use of the chancel is concerned. There seems to be no genuine appreciation or apparent understanding of the significance of such an architectural arrangement. It would be preferable to keep pulpit-centered and choir-centered churches if the congregation does nothing to revise its understanding of worship. This trend in building reveals the absence of a liturgical dynamism that is aware of the relationship of people and building as the setting for liturgical action.

There is also the danger of arid intellectualism. In the early church the actions, responses, and prayers that comprised the liturgical pattern were well known. The people felt the creative movement of the liturgy and participated freely and meaningfully. Not only the intellectually elite and the educated, but *all* of the congregation could participate. If liturgy is not to be merely the stage for the irrelevant pomposity of some clergymen, we shall have to make it possible for all levels of humanity to engage in this "work of the people." We live in an age when, as Paul Tillich tells us, symbols seem to have lost their power to communicate. Of course, this is not completely true, since all expression takes symbolic form. Nevertheless, many people today cannot interpret and find meaningful the symbolism that carried tremendous pow-

er in earlier days. This is partly due to the fact that we have been robbed of any comprehension of truth which does not lie within a context that is immediately verbal, propositional, and scientifically verifiable. This is true of the less educated masses as well as of the intellectually sophisticated. All of this is unfortunate because our humanity consists of our ability to rise above this mechanical realm: to *be* more and to *understand* more than that which is mathematically and literally substantiated. To the sophisticated the ability to interpret and use symbols seems to require a person of unique intellectual persuasion. Yet symbolism is inevitable in any expression of worship. It is basic to Christian liturgy. When we deal with the ultimate, we are forced into the symbolic as the concrete form by which we may do justice to the truth. The result is a dilemma which is hazardous for liturgical renewal because a great deal depends upon the community's ability to see the relationship between the grace of God in Christ Jesus and the symbolism of the liturgical pattern that recites the story of the working of that grace. Liturgical traditionalism obscures the dilemma by dogmatically asserting the objective and absolute validity and worth of the historic forms.

The problem of the esoteric has always plagued Christian worship. When the Christian community is truly at worship it *appears* to be doing something that excludes the rest of the world. Of course, this is not so. It is giving voice to the world's meaning. It is witnessing to the fact that he who creates, redeems. Perhaps it is an essential risk that liturgy should appear esoteric to the uninitiated. When Christian worship was in the process of formation, it was a service for initiates. The contact of the church with the uninitiated world was a different sort of contact than the worshiping life of those who were, in varying degrees, part of the Christian community. Church history informs us that only the baptized and those confirmed in the faith were admitted to the second part of the liturgy, the eucharist, or mass of the faithful. The catechumens and candidates for baptism were admitted only to the first part of the liturgy, the synaxis. Preparation of a profound nature was essential to the full participation in the worship and life of the church.

By contrast, we live in a society which has come to accept something called "worship" as a cultural and democratic right and phenomenon. "Worship" has become a matter of human freedom. It has become the privilege of going to any "breakfast table," if and when we please, in order to "worship," each in his own words, each in his own way. Such a society as this would find it exceedingly difficult to appreciate a worship life which includes only the initiated. Yet, if liturgy is to be dynamic rather than traditionalistic, must not some measure of initiation be reinstated as a prerequisite to life in the Christian community? If Christian worship remains esoteric to the baptized, then it has obviously become a liturgical traditionalism. But if the initiates begin to discover the liturgy as the "story of their lives," then worship has taken on a dynamism that is at once relevant and profound.

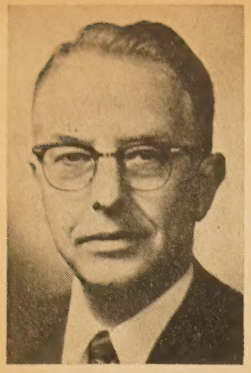
A Prayer

. . . . for Those Behind the Iron Curtain

O GOD, who hast ever borne the sorrows of earth: Look in tender mercy on all thy believing people whose lot it is to dwell among the enemies of thy gospel. Against open anger be thou their sure defense; against the slow parching of the spirit be thou their living fountain. In time of trial grant them stout hearts; in need, unfailing help; in loneliness, constant companionship; in gathering darkness, gladdening light; in the face of present defeat, the vision of endless victory. By the power of thy Spirit enable them to live nobly in the meanest circumstances, and do the best things in the worst times. And, above all else, help them to hold fast the faith and, whether in life or death, to bear unfailing witness to thee and to thy Son, Jesus Christ.

Forgive and regard with divine compassion all those who know thee not, especially those who make hard the lives of thy suffering people. By the power of thy boundless love open their eyes, turn their hearts, and their feet in the true way, that they, too, may be saved.

And, as we are one holy church, forgive us, too, for whom the lines are fallen in pleasant places, for the feebleness of our witness, the smallness of our charity, the slackness of our zeal and the dullness of our vision. Awaken us to the warfare against the forces of evil and cruelty, oppression and wrong, wherever they be. Arm us with the sword of the Spirit for the defense of thy holy Name. And help us manfully to stand in the confession of thy faith and truth, and, with all thy holy people, to continue in the same unto the end through the same Jesus Christ, thy Son our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen. — *This prayer, intended for use in the home or at services of worship, was prepared by Dr. Edward T. Horn III, at the request of the president of the United Lutheran Church.*



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

By Hillyer H. Straton

THE commonest greeting of the holiday season at the year's end is "Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year." Have you ever thought of the distance between the two? It is far more than seven days; it is a whole eon of thought. At the New Year we are particularly conscious of the passage of time. Time rushes by. There is a delightful story about Thomas Huxley, the great nineteenth century scientist, who was one of the most absent-minded men who ever lived. He arrived at Euston station, London, late for a speaking engagement. Jumping into a cab he shouted to the driver, "Hurry, I'm late." The driver went off at a furious pace. Huxley relaxed for a moment, then asked in some perturbation, "Cabbie, where am I going?" The cabbie replied, "I don't know where you are going but we'll get you there in a hurry!"

Two Kinds of Time

There are two kinds of time: *chronos* and *kairos. Chronos* is concerned with chronological time, clock time, calendar time, January 1, 1961. "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, . . ." (Matt. 2:1). "The words of Amos . . . two years before the earthquake" (Amos 1:1). The birth of Jesus is recorded in a specific period of history. Amos heard the word of God at a specific time before a definite earthquake. *Chronos* is what we are concerned with on New Year's or birthdays. On New Year's especially time seems to go round and round — it is circular. It comes out where it went in. This is the sort of time ancient pagans knew — and modern pagans: "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die." It tells us to take the round of existence that we have and make the most of it. Happy New Year; then three hundred and sixty-five days later another Happy New Year, with the same horn-blowing, balloon-busting, eating, drinking and drunkenness. Even the layman, when he stops to think about it, is conscious of the vast distance between the sanctity of Christmas and the revelry of New Year's. Perhaps the drinking is due to the growing frustration and anxiety we feel as time passes. The sands are running out for us.

The second kind of time is *kairos,* which is a point of time that has a fixed content. The time, the *kairos,* has arrived. D-Day is here. Jesus, in preparing for the last supper, sends his disciples into the village with instructions for the bringing of a colt, "The Teacher says, My time (my *kairos*) is at hand" (Matt. 26:18). In the first chapter of Acts, while responding to a question of the disciples about the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, Jesus replied, "It is not for you to know times (the *kairoi)* or seasons which the Father has fixed" (Acts 1:7).

Christmas is the decisive moment, the *kairos,* in which God entered into history. Paul expresses it, "But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons" (Gal. 4:4, 5). Therefore it is "merry" in the best sense of the term.

Scholars have pointed out that the Greek concept of time is cyclical. Everything will finally come out where it went in. There is a certain rationale for this, for seasons do come and go with little variation. Another view of time is that of the ancient Persians and modern evolutionists who think of time as an upward sloping line. Things will finally work out and we will all graduate into heaven — if we just have enough time. This is actually salvation by historical process. It is a view that has been discarded by most serious thinkers today, especially in the light of a possible atomic holocaust. When we turn to the Bible we discover that biblical time can be described by a straight

---

HILLYER H. STRATON *has been pastor of First Baptist Church, Malden, Massachusetts since 1946. A native of Texas, Dr. Straton was educated at Mercer University, Macon, Georgia; Columbia University, New York City; Harvard University; the Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary of Philadelphia and the Andover Newton Theological School. Active in denominational affairs and in the ecumenical movement, Dr. Straton still finds time to contribute frequently to religious and secular periodicals and is the author of several books. His latest,* A Guide to the Parables of Jesus, *is in use by a number of seminaries as a text.*

line. It starts magnificently with "In the beginning God . . ." and marches in a vast sweep to "a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." The linear concept knows only yesterday and tomorrow. God is in control of time and uses it for his own purposes.

In the Bible, God is the Lord of time and eternity. God reveals himself in time to a chosen people. "Hear this word that the Lord has spoken against you, O people of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up out of the land of Egypt: 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities' " (Amos 3:1, 2). You have a special responsibility because of your heritage. Yet God is also the God of the Ethiopians, the Philistines, and the Syrians as Amos sees: " 'Are you not like the Ethiopians to me, O people of Israel?' says the Lord. 'Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir?' " (Amos 9:7).

Christian Center of Time

History is holy. The Germans have a word for it, *heilsgeschichte*. "Primitive Christianity knows nothing of a timeless God." God is the One who is, was, and will be. In the New Testament Jesus is the bearer of God's lordship over time. "If I by the finger of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come near you." So, for Christians the center of time is Christ's coming. Christmas is the mid-point. For Jesus, the kingdom of God had already arrived: "I saw Satan fall as lightning from heaven." Oscar Cullmann remarks, "In reality, the increased intensity of hope in primitive Christianity is to be explained by the very fact that the center of time is not in the object of hope but rather in an already occurred historical fact. This then means that the hope for the future can now be supported by faith in the past, faith in the already concluded decisive battle."[1]

In the coming of Christ, victory over evil is established. It is the resurrection that assures the victory has taken place and been won. The solidarity between man and creation does not now depend upon an old story in Genesis, but is concentrated in a historical act. It pleased God through him (Christ) to reconcile all things to himself (Col. 1:19-20). All of Hebrew history was a preparation for this event, this coming. The Old Testament is an integral part of the redemptive history. The New Testament plus the whole history of the church is a commentary upon the event.

Christmas for the Christian is at the very center of time and eternity. For the followers of the Christ *kairos* has a significance that gives cosmic understanding to time. Paul Tillich, in one of his less abstruse moments, says: "Time is not meaningless. It has a hidden meaning — salvation. It has a hidden goal — the Kingdom of God. It brings about a hidden reality — new creation."[2]

This mid-point of history involves all of the event factors in the coming of Christ, his birth with its attendant wonders; his dedicated life with its central purpose, "Lo, I have come to do thy will, O God"; his profound teaching of righteousness and the spirit of the faith couched in such dramatic stories as the Good Samaritan and Prodigal Son; his shameful death on the cross and the assurance of his resurrection to men of faith. Jesus himself seems to have some consciousness of this mid-point factor. He had seen Satan fall as lightning (Luke 10:18). He casts out demons by the finger of God (Luke 11:20). He talks about his second coming and sees an interval of time elapsing before it takes place. Many Christians in their emphasis upon eschatology and the second coming in the future have overlooked that New Testament Christians faced a similar problem. At first they believed that the time events of the return were to be in their own life span. Toward the end of the century when John's Gospel was written, it was realized that the final consummation might be far removed and that there was another aspect to this whole matter. So in the Fourth Gospel we find Jesus saying, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you." Christians have experienced this coming in the Lord's Supper. Cullmann goes on: "The worship of the church finds its crown in the Supper celebrations. Here happens even now what really will take place only at the end. Christ returns already to the assembled congregation, as he one day will come in a way visible to all."[3]

At the beginning of the year especially, as throughout every day of the year, Christians ought to order their lives by God's time, the time which puts his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, at the very mid-point. We ought to make our history the holy history: God's dealings with his ancient people Israel; his dealings with the church through the ages; and, just as surely, his dealings with us.

Happy New Year now has a new relevance in the light of Merry Christmas, for our God is lord of time as well as history. Paul says that we are sons. As son of the Most High we know who has control of time and history. In Tolstoy's great novel, *War and Peace,* Napoleon is drawn on the grand scale with all the hauteur which he felt he possessed. When the author describes the battle of Borodino, which was a turning point in the French invasion of Russia, he says: "On Napoleon for the first time (*kronos*) the hand of an opponent of stronger spirit had been laid." The radical Christian who spoke through this great Russian author then goes on to picture the essential little-

[1] Oscar Cullmann, *Christ and Time.* Copyright 1950 by W. L. Jenkins. The Westminster Press. Used by permission.

[2] Paul Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons).

[3] *Op. cit.*

ness that was in such a man as Napoleon when contrasted with the essential *right* that belonged to the Man of Nazareth. "For us with the standard of good and evil given us by Christ, no human actions are incommensurable. And there is no greatness where simplicity, goodness, and truth are absent." Jesus is lord of time and eternity.

"Have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (Phil. 2:5-9). So wrote Paul in a great Christological passage in Philippians. He went on to describe Jesus as one who came in human form, who was obedient even to death on the cross and who has been exalted to the right hand of God himself.

The One who came in the fullness of time, *kairos,* who is at the mid-point of history, had said it all much simpler than either Tolstoy or Paul. James and John had asked him for the chief seats in the coming kingdom. Jesus replied, "You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all" (Mark 10:42-44). It is this service to others that Jesus exemplified so perfectly, this coming of God's Son at the mid-point of all history, this "Merry Christmas" that makes the New Year and all of the years of God's tomorrow happy.

If Wise Men Are to Come Again
The Church Needs a Theology to Meet Them

That the Wise Men Might Come Again

By Jaroslav Pelikan

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East and have come to worship him." Matthew 2:1, 2

THE beginning of the New Year coincides with the opening of the winter quarter in the academic year and with one of the high festivals of the church year, the Feast of the Epiphany, at which the church commemorates the coming of the Wise Men. That coincidence brings a special poignancy to the Christian commemoration of the Epiphany of Our Lord on the campus of a university. For whatever may be the meaning of the story of the Epiphany, it is evident that the Wise Men do not come any more. At one time, the Wise Men lived in the church and by the church. Her nurture in the sacraments gave them sustenance, her fellowship gave them support, her traditions gave them continuity and direction. Then, for a while, the Wise Men fought against the church, striving to obtain and maintain their independence from the oppressive authority of an orthodoxy that identified its formulas with the voice of God. But today the Wise Men no longer live in the church, and they no longer fight against the church. Instead they find it possible to ignore the church. Research into history, society, literature, or culture passes over the church, or at most interprets the church as an expression of other more fundamental values and motives in the life of men and of nations.

And so the Wise Men do not come any more, because they are convinced that the church not only does not have the right answers, but cannot

---

JAROSLAV PELIKAN *is professor of historical theology at the divinity school of the University of Chicago. An ordained minister of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, he is coeditor of a projected fifty-six volume collection of* Luther's Works, *thirteen volumes of which have been published to date. Dr. Pelikan's book,* The Riddle of Roman Catholicism, *was the winner of the Abingdon Award in 1959.*

even comprehend their questions. What is more, I cannot say that I blame them. That is what makes Epiphany so embarrassing. We who are devoted both to the church and to the life of learning have found from our own experience that much of the church's tradition no longer makes any sense. If the Wise Men are ever to come again, the life and thought of the church will have to be re-examined and reinterpreted more radically and more creatively than most theologians have dared to admit. The church may very well decide that at such a cost it does not care whether the Wise Men ever come again or not; and in fact a large part of the church has so decided. But if the church does take this turn, it will be unfaithful not merely to the quests of the inquiring mind, but to the very tradition which it is so anxious to defend. The questions of the Wise Men demand a new look at the tradition of the church, and the tradition of the church requires new attention to the questions of the Wise Men. Only then can the questions of the Wise Men today become questions of the Wise Men in the text: "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East and have come to worship him."

I

If the Wise Men are ever to come again, the church will need a theology to meet them when they come. Standing as we are in the shadow of the Epiphany, let us see whether the coming of the first Wise Men gives us any suggestions about the formulation of such a theology.

If the Wise Men are ever to come again, we shall need a theology that takes its beginning from the issues and quests of contemporary experience, learning, and knowledge. "We have seen his star in the East." Pursuing the best knowledge available to them, they saw his star. Devoting themselves as best they could to the information, techniques, and skills of their time, they followed them through and went where the star led. Scanning the heavens and puzzling over their meaning, they came to him who was Lord of the heavens. It is not without meaning that the technique they followed, the astrological one, was simultaneously the highest knowledge and the deepest superstition of their age, in equal measure. For they found in Christ the fulfillment of the knowledge rescued from the superstition, the power of God in magic over magic. And thus pursuing their own best knowledge to its ultimate source, to its final implication, they followed the star until it led them to where the young child lay. And going in they found him, and Mary, his mother.

Christianity thus met, affirmed, and transcended the best thought of its time. Unabashedly, the early Christians took over from the best thought of their time, ideas and words with which to express, however badly, that which had happened to them. The history of the early church and of its thought is the history of its efforts to find the right formula — trying on all sorts of formulas for size, rejecting some, adapting others, recovering yet others, reaching into the strangest places, drawing from the most unexpected sources in order to give voice to the recognition that the star led to him, that in him knowledge and wisdom were fulfilled, incarnate, and transcended. "We have seen his star in the East"; studying it and following it, they came to him. Thus Christian thought needs the courage and the trust to speak to the men of today in the accents of today. It is hair-raising how bold the primitive church was in its efforts to do this. They had known angels; they called him an angel. They had known the reason that was built into the structure of the universe; they called him the Reason of God. They had known the fullness of God, which seemed to be spilling over into the universe; they called him the *pleroma,* the fullness. And we Christians today are still willing to speak to the men of today in the best accents of the third century! The difference between tradition and traditionalism, it has been said, is that tradition is the living faith of the dead, and traditionalism is the dead faith of the living. It is to a living tradition, not to a traditionalism, that the Feast of the Epiphany summons us. It is to recognize the science and the superstition in contemporary thought and experience so that seeing the star in the East, and even in the Middle West, Wise Men might come again. They come again if the church learns to take seriously, and yet not overseriously, the thought and language and experience of the only century in which most of us shall ever live.

II

That the Wise Men might come again, we shall need a theology that puts itself squarely into the continuity of God's people. For when they saw the star and followed it, they did not climb up to the star. "Behold, Wise Men from the East came *to Jerusalem.*" They were not summoned, indeed, to deny their own history, to go back on their own culture, to cut themselves off from their own tradition. The Epiphany story closes with the cryptic words: "They departed to their own countries by another way." Thus they were not asked to pull up roots, but they were asked to go from their own countries to visit the city where God's people remembered his special acts and words. Returning to their own countries, they were changed. Coming from their own countries, they put themselves into the continuity of God's people. As the high prophets of the Old Testament had envisioned, the nations of the world were to come to Jerusalem to learn Torah. Because God had dealt with Israel in a special way, the star of their own learning led them to that city, that there they might put themselves into line with the history of God's people, that there they might recognize the ultimate con-

gruence between their own history and Israel's history. For what God had given to Israel, he had to remind them over and over, was not merely for Israel; and he was the God of all the nations.

As they came to Jerusalem and to Israel, so we must continually put ourselves squarely into the continuity of the people of God in the Old Testament and in the church. They were not asked to deny their times, their history or culture; but they were asked to affirm and fulfill it. And so are we, not because we deny this time or its culture, but because this time rests upon the memory and wisdom of the church, deeper and broader than we are, deeper and broader than the church itself is. Therefore following the star, we come to Jerusalem. Examining our own thought and culture, we come to the continuity of the people of God. But though they came to Jerusalem, they did not find the king there. Yet they could not have found him if they had not come to Jerusalem first.

III

This paradox means that if the Wise Men are ever to come again, we shall need a theology which, recognizing the continuity of the church's faith and tradition, recognizes and opens itself up to the continuing newness of our Lord Jesus Christ as both the fulfillment and the correction of our learning and our tradition. "Where is he that is born king of the Jews?" Someone had been born, something new had happened. Nothing breaks up the routine of a tidy continuity as quickly as a newborn child. To recognize his newness is to recognize him as "born king of the Jews." As King of the Jews he was the fulfillment of Israel's history. In him Israel came to realize itself; he was, as the Christian use of the Old Testament made clear, "Israel in the flesh and God with us." But to recognize that he was *born* King of the Jews, was to see that in him Israel's tradition was not only fulfilled, but also changed and corrected. They came to Jerusalem, and in Jerusalem they learned that it was in Bethlehem of Judea that they were to seek him. Beyond Jerusalem, with its institutions and traditions, was that "new thing" which God had promised through Jeremiah that he would perform. That new thing fulfilled their learning and corrected it: fulfilled it because the star did indeed lead them; corrected it because in a culture which saw the stars as gods, he proclaimed deliverance from the spirits of the air and the powers of the planets. In the God who was Creator not merely of men and of nations, but even of the mysterious heavens, were both fulfillment and correction, the newness of Jesus Christ.

In the ways that we cannot know until we try, Jesus Christ is still the fulfillment and the correction of our learning as well as of the religion of the church. His freshness ever and again visits itself upon the church. Its newness is inexhaustible, and from his fullness have we all received grace upon grace. The history of the Christian church, the history of Christian theology, is the history of his power to fulfill and correct, to come in response to men's prayers where praying men least expect him, and to show that he is, as St. Augustine called him, "the beauty, ever ancient, ever new." This he does by pointing us beyond our learning and culture, yes, beyond our vision and tradition, to the new and yet ancient reality that he came to bring, pointing us beyond our books and beyond our thoughts to the end of the argument.

IV

If the Wise Men are ever to come again, we shall need a theology that finds its completion in adoration. "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East and have come, not to write a book about him, but to worship him." For we know now, thanks to the historical study of generations, that the church to which the Wise Men came was a church which knew the postures of adoration. The primitive church was a worshiping church. We know now that it spoke to its culture from the center of its worship and that culture and cultus were in continual dialogue. The place where the church fulfilled and corrected its culture was primarily in its cultus. And we know too that the church's theology was not a conversation between emancipated minds and enslaved minds, but the conversation between devoted minds, which spoke from the center of the altar. *Theologein* in Greek can mean to praise God, for theology is doxology. The creeds were not the flexing of an authoritarian episcopal muscle trying to drive free minds out of the church; the creeds were acts of devotion. The Apostle Paul, exhausting speculation and biblical study and all other resources to probe the meaning of the faith in the Epistle to the Romans, finally solved the problem on his knees. "O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!" First he stretched the mind to its limit; and then, not by denying the mind, but by fulfilling it, he followed the star and came to worship. So St. Augustine, who certainly qualifies as a Wise Man; so also the fathers in faith through all the Christian centuries.

If Christian theology is to speak to the Wise Men today, if they are ever to come again, theology must point not only beyond *their* learning, but beyond *its* learning, beyond itself to the worship of him whom both learning and theology serve. Theology must seek its own fulfillment and its own extinction in worship, not by denying the life of the mind, but by fulfilling it. And as Abraham offered up Isaac in order to receive him again, so theology continually offers up itself in acts of devotion, that from the hands of the living God it might receive the old and yet new assignment to worship him with all its heart and soul and mind.

That the Wise Men might come again, we pray for such a theology: a theology which in re-examining the tradition will prove itself most loyal to the tradition; a theology which will live and think and pray in devotion to the one God of the star and of the Child, of the church and of the world. For such a theology we pray, in the words of the church's ancient collect for the Feast of the Epiphany, preserved in the eighth-century Gregorian Sacramentary and going back to the early centuries of the Faith:

"O God, who on this day by the leading of a star didst reveal thine only-begotten Son to the Gentiles: Mercifully grant that we, who know thee now by faith, may be brought to contemplate the beauty of thy Majesty; through the same thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

THE MOURNERS BENCH

By G. Hobab Kish

THE gripe — I mean the subject — for today is panel discussions. I am afraid it is too late to do anything about this method of wasting time, for it has become firmly established in our mores. You just cannot have a conference or a program without some member of the committee bleating forth: "I think it would be nice to have a panel." To question this lowest form of communication is to label oneself as hopelessly out of step with the times. So, we go along and we have a panel.

We place three to seven well-meaning citizens around a table on a platform, and we appoint a chairman — I mean a moderator. Now the moderator is not supposed to do much talking except right at the beginning. He is to set the stage, so to speak, for the others. He introduces the members and he must give the impression that each is an expert in his own field. He does the best he can with what he has to work with and we are off.

There are always the same fellows on every panel. They have different names and they look different, but they are actually the same ones disguised. One is bashful and will only mumble a few words if he is put on the spot. He is probably the brightest one of the bunch, but he does not express himself well. His stammering is painful and one wishes that he had written out a speech and read it. Another is the blunt type. He blares forth his opinion with assurance and with an air of "there will be no nonsense or even courtesy about this." The trouble is, he is not very bright. There is always the fellow who explains what the other members of the panel really meant. Brethren, there is nothing more agonizing than to have this self-appointed interpreter explain you. He is the great leveler who makes every point of view grey and undistinguished. Then there has to be one cute guy. Sometimes it is a woman who hovers just on the edge of baby talk.

Every panel has a member who wants to dominate the show. He takes a long time to say very little, but he gets what he thinks is a new idea every time another member speaks. The chairman tries to ignore him, but he will utter his triteness unless the chairman tells him kindly to shut up.

But the worst thing about the whole process is the assumption that any subject can be used profitably by a panel. I heard one on atomic power by people who knew no more about it than I do. Seven times zero is still zero. A few friends sitting around sharing their ideas asking questions, expressing opinions, is one thing. Putting it in an auditorium is something else. I must confess that the law of averages works and every now and then there will be a pretty good result. But there will be twenty fiascoes for the one success.

I overheard a Sunday school teacher talking about the Trinity. She finally summed it all up by saying, "It is a kind of heavenly panel." And I crept away in despair. Hobab is not easily discouraged and, if I may say so, he is usually on the optimistic side. But this remark has so broken my spirit, that I have not smiled for days. The universe presided over by a panel is more horrible to contemplate than any hell imaginable.

Are there any men left who will be counted? Dare we insist that if there must be a program, we will have a man stand on his feet and declare himself? We are homesick for a prophet with a "thus said the Lord." Enough of these little, wishy-washy conversations. Give us a speech. Make a pronouncement! I cannot believe that I alone am left of those who have not yet bowed the knee to this Baal.

Life's Redeeming Pace

By James S. Thomas

A FEATURE article in a recent Sunday newspaper carried the story of a young man to whom success had come too fast. The young man was twenty-three years old, a success in his chosen field, and wealthy. What more could a young man wish for? But, in the midst of success, he had a serious problem. He had come too far, too fast! He did not know how long his success would hold out. Once having enjoyed the spotlight, he did not know how to adjust to ordinary living.

The story of this young man poses one of life's main problems. There is a pace that kills and one that redeems. And medical statistics reveal that we have learned much more about life's killing pace than about the redeeming one. How fast is too fast and what is fast enough? One of our primary problems is premature and shallow success.

Now, we see at the outset that much of this problem grows out of the complexity and drive of modern living. It is not so much our considered choice to live fast as it is the drive of life about us.

I remember one day, during World War II, when I was returning from an adult education institute near a seaport town. It was a time when all available industrial plants were mobilized for national defense. In the morning, streams of automobiles made their way to the shipyards. They were filled with workers anxious to improve on yesterday's output. In the afternoon, the same stream poured out of the shipyards, as if chased by unearthly beings. Having bettered yesterday's output, they were tired and anxious to get home. I was driving at moderate speed down the narrow highway, my mind slowly reliving the day's events. Hardly had I passed the driveway of the plant when this stream of cars pulled up behind me. They pushed me to a respectable 55 miles per hour, while the less patient got in front. Then I found myself in between a group of cars bent on high speed. To stop would mean a series of crackups. I could not go around and I could not drop out. The pace had been set by others. In self-defense I had to stay in line.

Much of modern life is that way. So many talk about our killing pace, but few dare to drop out.

Let us see, then, that our problem is deeper than that of rapid activity. Nor is the problem a new one. It is true that the sheer drive of modern living sets our pace. It is also true that all civilizations feel a sense of urgency in the race between resources and goals. The problem is, at bottom, a spiritual one. There is a pace that kills and one that redeems. Each proceeds from a basic assumption about life, about God, about the nature of man, about values, and about eternity. The problem can be put negatively by asking, "Why be frantic?" It can be stated positively in the majestic words of the Old Testament:

> Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, "My way is hid from the Lord, and my right is disregarded by my God"? Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary, his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. Isaiah 40:27-31

In our generation, we run the risk of arriving with too little too late. We run, also, the grave danger of arriving with too much too soon.

Let us see this basic thought in three relationships. First, a redeeming pace is one of enlightened alternation. Second, a redeeming pace is one of dedicated perspective. Third, a redeeming pace is one of trust in the Lord of life.

No discerning man would decry our busy life simply on surface analysis. Actually, it is a matter of temperament as to who prefers much activity or little. Our problem is finding adequate roots for our busyness, goals worthy of our striving. It is here that we run into the spiritual problem. It is important, at some stages in life, to go fast. But

---

JAMES S. THOMAS *is associate director of the division of higher education of the Board of Education of The Methodist Church, Nashville, Tennessee. A graduate of Claflin College, Gammon Theological Seminary, with an M.A. degree from Drew University, he received his doctorate from Cornell University. Before accepting his present position, Dr. Thomas was professor and dean of students at Gammon Theological Seminary and has also held pastorates in South Carolina.*

it is much more important to have *urgent goals* that require speed. There are some conditions of life that demand quick action, or none at all.

As we review our lives, it is well to remember that every normal person faces times when it is proper to alternate his pace. It takes only one look at a football game to convince one that this is a *young* man's game. The other extreme is the college graduate who approached his first interview asking two questions: "How much does it pay?" and "What are the retirement provisions?"

Enlightened alternation means knowing when speed is essential. In this connection, we must recognize life's irredeemable options. One can learn at a faster rate in his younger years than in older years. He cannot redeem this option in his sixties if he has failed to use it in his twenties. What will one learn in his days of youth? Generally speaking, we are more open to high adventure in youth than in older age. This option is rarely redeemed after forty. What risks will we take now, what unexplored territory will we see? Or again, one can make clearer dedication in youth. Age is the time for mellowing and deepening. What are we now dedicated to?

Our everyday lives should show this heartbeat between intense activity and recreation. There must be time for cogitation, for musing, for digestion. If a man must run, he should not have to run all day long. If one must catch up, he should not be catching up all year. If one must burn midnight oil, he must realize that even lamps need refilling.

The wisdom of this alternation is never more apparent than at times of great stress. A young man was once in the position of writing a doctor's thesis while carrying a full-time job. For a long time, it seemed wise to forget the needs of body and mind and drive ruthlessly to the goal. But the body and mind rebelled at such treatment. It proved wiser to write when the mind was rested and clear and to relax when frustration set in. As a result, the over-all project was completed in good time. Alternation is often more profitable than perspiration.

At this point, let us see that enlightened perspective can provide the redeeming pace. A man must see himself in proper relationship to his background, his ideals, and his goals. Especially must he come to terms with that harshest of all masters — ambition. He must set his goal and measure his pace.

Several months ago, a national magazine carried the story of an outstanding young public leader who had an ambitious schedule. This schedule should place our friend in national leadership in four years — if the pace doesn't kill him.

Let it be understood that there is nothing wrong with goals. But when one must proceed toward his goal with frantic recklessness because of an ambitious schedule, he is moving at the pace that kills. For he immediately becomes the center of his own schedule, and this is fatal. Life is always broader than one man.

In characteristic frankness, the Bible tells the story of a young shepherd boy who knew the blessed pace of a quiet countryside. He was happy in a boyish sort of delight. Then he rose in the scale of success so rapidly that he lost perspective. With himself at the center, he pushed aside both law and religion. The sense of power took control. Later, prematurely old, he repented. He got where he was going too fast.

If one sees himself in terms of a great goal and gives himself to quality, he will find a perspective which will set his pace. If a man really wants to be a great teacher, he will give himself to such thoroughness in learning that the rate becomes secondary. If a man really wants to be a great surgeon, he will not cry over four years in medical school and five or more years in deep study and research. If a man really wants to become a great preacher, he will not dash off sermons to be delivered at the rate of 365 per year.

If one wants to find a redeeming pace, he must give himself to a great goal, measure the task, and proceed with a quality of life which is its own pace.

One of the strangest things about life is the undercurrent of frantic haste which shows through our lives, no matter what our pace. Our critical need is for a sense of trust in the God of the universe which makes calm living possible.

Harry Emerson Fosdick, in a great sermon, remarked that "Nine times out of ten what breaks us down is an external strain plus a sense of internal inadequacy to meet it." How true that is. We look at different people as they face essentially the same set of circumstances and ask why their reactions are so different. Why does one person beat the air in aimless activity while another acts with deliberate calm? Is it because of the outer storm or the inner roots? Our devotion to God shows up in the pace we keep in life; our trust in God shows through.

A man can live a life which is outwardly of a very high order, always with himself as god. If he is a social reformer, he can take every bad condition as a personal affront. He can jealously mark off victories which he has won. He can declare personal war on evil and and work day and night for its downfall. And he can die young, leaving as much evil as he found.

Or he can set his goal, realizing that God has been seeking the triumph of right much longer than he. His work can be done thoroughly and hopefully. He can seem to work slower only because of his belief that the final victory rests with God. At times he will grow weary. Yet he will know when to walk, or to run, or to rise up with wings as the eagle. This he will know because he will first wait for God; and finding him, he will find also life's redeeming pace.

The Center Does Not Fail

By Harold E. Fey

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not because of works lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:8.

NOT foxhole religion but a frontline faith is our need today. Now that Russia threatens bombardment of American cities with nuclear rockets, we are all living in the front lines. On what ground can a faith be rested that will be adequate for this test?

When Arthur M. Schlesinger's book *The Vital Center* appeared a decade ago, it created something of an impression in university circles. Like most books and most sermons which present a mirror to the times, the passage of time erodes the interest the book had when it first appeared. But its closing words can still supply a take-off point: "The center is vital; the center must hold. The object of the new radicalism is to restore the center, to reunite individual and community in fruitful union."[1] The vital center, according to this Harvard professor, consists of the corps of free and decent men and women who are dedicated to fight against the deception and tyranny of fascism and communism, against oppression and stagnation in our own land, against pride and corruption within ourselves. "The commitment is complex and rigorous," he said. But out of the effort, out of the struggle alone, can come the high courage and faith which will preserve freedom."[2]

Freedom is still in danger and high courage and faith are still needed to serve it. But the source of courage and faith is not to be found in Schlesinger's humanism; it does not hide in the flare and excitement of battle, even battle for the noblest cause. The vital center is the living God, and it does hold. Everything else may fail, but the center holds firm. Christianity's object is not to restore the center, but to proclaim that we must all be restored to the center. It does not declare the center must hold because it believes the center does hold. This faith and not "togetherness," is what reunites individual and community in fruitful union. This is the source of high courage.

We are, as the Pulitzer prizewinner says, engaged in a fateful struggle against tyranny, inertia and sinful pride, and we have got to fight. We are fighting against national complacency and personal alienation; against the sin which easily besets us and wickedness in high places; against material affluence and spiritual poverty at home and communist misrepresentations and threats abroad. This is not play; we battle for the highest possible stakes — for survival, for integrity, for the possibility that free men can live and die in dignity, for the truth as it is known and as it may be found, for a better future for the world. But the struggle is not merely a humanistic enterprise. It engages God as well as men. The whole order of existence is involved, and the link between man and God is faith gained through Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul saw this struggle reaching far back into prehistory, back to the dim hour when a chieftain of Mesopotamia in an act of faith identified himself with God's liberating purpose for all mankind. "That is why," Paul said, "it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on [God's] grace and be guaranteed to all his [Abraham's] descendants — not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham, for he is the father of us all, as it is written, 'I have made you the father

[1] Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Vital Center* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1949). Used by permission.

[2] *Ibid.*

HAROLD E. FEY *is editor of* The Christian Century *and a contributing editor of The Pulpit. A minister of the Disciples of Christ, he has degrees from Chicago Theological Seminary, Cotner College and Yale Divinity School. Prior to joining the Century staff in 1940, he taught in Union Theological Seminary, Manila, P.I., was editor of* World Call, *the Disciples monthly, and founded* Fellowship, *the organ of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. He is the author of* The Lord's Supper: Seven Meanings *and co-author of* Indians and Other Americans, *published by Harpers in 1959.*

of many nations' — in the presence of the God in whom he believed."

It depends on God, whom we know through faith. God is the vital center and when this center is lacking, nothing comes out right. When personal life is oriented to this center, anything can be endured — personal disaster, inner conflicts, intellectual or spiritual trouble, national catastrophe — anything! They cannot only be endured, but conquered. For there is fellowship of faith, as Paul said, which reaches back to the dawn of civilization, to Abraham, who "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. So you see it is men of faith who are the sons of Abraham."

What is the nature of the faith by which we are related to the center that does not fail? It has something to do with knowledge but it always implies an element of doubt. If no ground for doubt existed, faith would not be needed. The most important of all forms of knowledge comes through faith — the knowledge of God. God cannot be known without faith. So faith also involves an act of will, of decision. This act is not merely our own initiative; it is taken in response to divine initiative, so we can know that faith itself is a gift — a co-operation, not a private invention. Faith is compatible with broad and creative reason, but it goes beyond reason. It is not solely intellectual, propositional, dogmatic, although Protestants have often made it such. It involves the whole person but it makes use of evidences, of rational grounds for belief.

The chief of these evidences is Jesus Christ, who lived in history, who shared fully in the human predicament and who showed us that God is the vital center, that his nature is that of a father and that his power is dedicated to the forgiveness of our sins and the transformation of all mankind into a community of faith, hope and love. Jesus often spoke of himself as the sign, the evidence, for faith in God. He pointed to great moments in the life of Israel when the liberating purpose of God for all men clearly shone forth. He then declared himself as the demonstration of God's purpose to work still mightier acts of redemption. Jesus insisted that God had created a new order of liberation for all mankind and that this new order, this Kingdom of God, was already in existence. He, Christ, was the evidence, the portent, that God was accomplishing his purpose, that faith in God was justified. He showed that God was even then generating the faith he demands, that in all sorts of ways he was speaking to those who had ears to hear, acting before those who had eyes to see. The old Israel had failed, but it had served as the forerunner of the new community which God through Christ was creating before their eyes. This new social order fulfilled the Scriptures. It caught up the whole historical experience of a people and was now moving out on its mission of universal love to the whole human race.

After Jesus' death, the members of the new community "had their faith reconstituted by the overwhelming events of Christ's resurrection," as Alan Richardson says. Here was additional evidence, for "faith in the working of God raised him from the dead." Then the disciples went everywhere declaring the news of God's mighty acts in Christ and even more evidence appeared. The church was born. When Graeco-Roman civilization collapsed because of its own corruption and because of an uprising of barbarians something like what is happening over the world today, further evidences appeared. Out of the church grew European civilization which saved the better elements of Hebraic, Grecian and Roman culture until the time came when they could be transmitted to the world.

Faith is not something to be fulfilled in one moment, say of conversion, but it must be maintained by constant striving. It is related to the reorientation of the whole personality which is called repentance. It involves obedience to God, an ethical revolution. The knowledge that comes from God of forgiveness, of acceptance, of adoption, brings newness of life and spirit, transformation of the mind, liberation of the whole personality. It results in new associations in the church and in society which endure because God is their vital center.

The most powerful foe of faith is the attitude called secularism. Secularism seeks to limit man. It says his proper business is limited to looking after his welfare in the here and now. It holds man wastes his time in bothering about God or the cosmic affirmations of faith. It makes man the vital center. Allied with secularism is the philosophy of naturalism which finds the only effective key to reality in science and which is commonly indifferent or hostile to the church. Allied with secularism and naturalism is humanism which substitutes for belief in God faith in man's own natural goodness and in his capacity to save himself. Humanism assumes that belief in God is an anachronism, that it has no real value to the person, no essential function in civilization.

The fact that secularism and its allies can continue to be blind to the reality of evil and the fact of human sin in the face of overwhelming evidence that they exist, tells something very significant about these rivals to faith in God. They have no answer to the evils that arise in the soul from the struggle for power, from individual or mass egotism and pride, from all sorts of depravity. They stand silent before such awful evidences of evil as Hitler left in extermination factories where six million Jews died. They have

nothing to offer to introduce morality into the processes of science, although what happened fifteen years ago at Hiroshima and Nagasaki warns that we shall all perish unless morality takes control. These forms of evil are realities, but secularism refuses to recognize their existence. Any faith which has so clearly lost contact with reality as has secularism and its allies cannot be trusted. If it prevails it will carry down to destruction those who hold it and the rest of us with them.

It was quite appropriate therefore that the book to which I referred at the beginning should have as its frontispiece a poem which accurately pictures the condition created by religions without God. William Butler Yeats' dirge for humanity is often heard today:

> Turning and turning in the widening gyre
> The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
> Things fall apart, the center cannot hold;
> Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
> The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
> The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
> The best lack all conviction, while the worst
> Are full of passionate intensity.[3]

It is, therefore, no answer to seek the vital center, to seek salvation as the humanist does in the company of decent men who fight for freedom. Those who are decent simply because decency is the decent thing sooner or later must ask themselves the question: Why is decency the decent thing if there is no God? The question cannot be answered. Faith in God is as essential to intelligent and honest living as it is to survival.

The failure of our contemporary forms of religion without God has made ours an age of anxiety. We know how frail are the life rafts on which we float on a sea of change; how great are the storms which can quickly rise in the night; how inexpert and unprepared we are to cope with uprootedness and alienation in a hostile world. So we are haunted, as Paul Tillich says, by meaninglessness, by guilt and by fear of death. Currently we are engaged in an attempt to recover meaning. Led by *Life* magazine and the great gray *New York Times,* we are doing our homework on our national purpose. This is a remarkable enterprise. Nobody seems to remember that only yesterday we thought we knew that our national purpose was the sum of all our little private purposes. The whole of our efforts would add up to progress, prosperity and peace if only each one of us would devote himself diligently to looking out for himself. But something seems to have gone wrong. Now our President has appointed a commission to search for our national purpose, as though it had been lost or mislaid. Is this because the aims of our fathers were too small, or because the goals of our private lives are too narrow?

It is because we in the U.S. are spending our affluence prodigally and wickedly, pouring out $40 billion a year on recreation and play when the fate of the world hangs in the balance. It is because we are foolishly fearful, spending another $40 billion on military defense when our foes are reducing their armies and our friends are crying vainly for help in meeting the Soviet economic and social offensive. Meaning will return to our personal lives and purpose to our nation when faith in God's design gives us the perspective we must have rightly to judge how to dedicate our lives and our resources to him who is the enduring center.

The feeling of guilt of which Tillich spoke assumes many forms. In his book *Why Men Confess* John Rogge says that the general sense of guilt causes men to confess often to crimes which they did not commit. Arthur Koestler speaks in his autobiography of an "awareness of guilt and impending punishment" in his life as seeming to "be always present, like the rhythmic beat of the surf at night along the shore." There are special reasons why this burden of guilt rests heavily on us and our generation. Guilt and a sense of alienation are always present in civilized man, who lives in the presence of law and conscience. But this cloud of incrimination has its silver lining of forgiveness and reconciliation. Its special burden in our time offers its special opportunity. We can know that knowledge of guilt is a summons to faith in God whose forgiveness and mercy every person can experience. The personal discovery of the goodness and mercy of God through faith — only through faith — can transform guilt into gratitude, apprehension into liberation.

The fear of death, of which Paul Tillich speaks, conceals itself by all sorts of devices, most of which are cultivated for profit by the profession of "Digger O'Dell." This fear often seems to increase as affluence grows and life expectancy lengthens, for it is greater today than it was in the days of our poorer and shorter-lived ancestors. It could be linked to realistic knowledge of the possibility of nuclear extinction and to the sense of guilt for the part our nation played in producing the threat which now menaces all life on earth. It is an interesting thing that no matter what part of the country a man comes from, he can think of special reasons why the first nuclear bomb to land in America is likely to land where he is.

But whatever its cause, the presence of a general fear of death also offers its own important liberation if we have faith to grasp the most formidable nettle of life. This fear is not new; it is inherent in our mortality. But it is strong

[3] W. B. Yeats, "The Second Coming," in *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats* (New York: Macmillan, 1951). Used by permission.

and pervasive today and it beckons us to claim in faith the life which triumphs over death, to claim it as our own. It is true, as many a soldier can testify, that we never know how full and wonderful life can be until we confront the fact of death with faith in God who brought Christ from the dead. The Christ of the resurrection can and does help us moderns to make our own the singing triumph, the quenchless vigor and happiness of the early church whose members also lived daily in the presence of death.

We live in a time of apocalyptic events. Our President is rebuffed in Paris and Tokyo. When we resist the effort of a distracted television dictator to make a neighbor state into a Soviet satellite, we are threatened with extermination by rockets fired from the other side of the earth. A world-wide propaganda spreads hatred for America. Vast areas of Africa teeter on the edge of tribalistic chaos under the prodding of an outmoded nationalism. Our China policy seems only to have magnified that totalitarian giant. It is not easy to maintain high courage and faith when we see how easily rebuffs could be succeeded by disasters. It is not easy when our destiny to be of service to a frantic world in a many-sided upheaval encounters so many obstacles in ourselves and in our world.

But where else have we to turn except to faith in God through Christ? The humanist Bertrand Russell, in a strange lapse, a few years ago said that what our age needs most of all "is love, Christian love, or compassion. If you have this," he said, "you have a motive for existence, a guide in action, a reason for courage, an imperative necessity for intellectual honesty." Today believe that you can know Christian love, in yourself and in the church. Today believe that God is at work through men and women of faith building his Kingdom which shall prevail. Today have faith in God as the center which holds firm, whose grace saves us through faith in his son Jesus Christ. Today welcome his gift of faith. Today pray, "Lord, I believe: help Thou my unbelief."

I Am the Church

By Donald E. Overlock

I AM the church. I come in a variety of styles, shapes, colors, and conditions. I vary from great stone sepulchers copied from several beautiful cathedrals of several different ages and architectures to crude yellow and brown halls. I am set daintily white upon the village green, or militantly black upon the slum. I am possessed of clear white glass, pallidly painted biblical scenes, frosted 19th century rococo, and rose windows wired with chicken fencing so that the youth group may play volleyball below.

Everyone knows me because I have always been here — "down the road a mile or two — past the general store, the supermarket, the shopping center, or the the rubble cleared for new housing; you can't miss me." If I am Roman Catholic, my doors are open, and I am spotless within; if I am Protestant, my doors are probably locked, and my cleanliness depends upon the attitude of the present janitor. I am towers, belfries, spires; clanging, chiming, broadcasting; pointing, leaning, squatting; cross-topped, rooster-topped, fish-weathervane-topped, and topless; but I am the church, and God calls you to me.

On Sunday, I am full, empty, and a little of both. My coffers are the same. My sanctuary is lovely, horrible, inspiring; split chanceled and central pulpited; but whatever my condition, men have found their God within me. My guest books are filled with the names of a great many insignificant signatures of insignificant people, who have spread their insignificance throughout my frame; for below my sanctuary, or jutting out from my sides, are the "doing centers" of my life. Here, the ladies cook, the Boy Scouts do artificial respiration, the youth play games, the children are squashed into filmstrip darkness, and the executive committee huddles in tobacco smoke. But I am the church and God calls you to me.

I am supposed to be the bride of Christ. But ofttimes my bouquet is dried up, and my crown

---

DONALD E. OVERLOCK *has served First Congregational Church, New Bedford, Massachusetts, for three years — first as student pastor and now full time minister. He is a graduate of Boston University, with a B.S. in religious education from New York University and B.D. from Andover Newton Theological School.*

This sermon was preached to the students and professors of the Andover Newton Theological School by Mr. Overlock while an intern at the school.

slipped long ago. Men have prostituted my purpose, and then complained bitterly of my failing. They have read their own petty schemes into my lofty desires, and the resultant weakness can easily be bought for twenty-five cents a week! Men are always waiting for my bridal march to begin, and women are always fussing about the cookies, the pastry, and the coffee of my reception. The bridegroom Christ and I have waited throughout all of time for you; we are the church — and God calls you to us.

I am supposed to be the household of God, but Jesus was sometimes more correct when he labeled me a den of robbers. For my narthex is full of literature for sale, ten-cent post cards, one-dollar dishes with my picture upon them; and men continue to use me for a short cut to get social distinction, to get community standing, to get married, to get the baby done, to get away from it all, and to get pardon and forgiveness. Most men expect me to dole out sacraments, grace, easiness, and inspiration, like the Fuller Brush man. Yet some few widows come unto me with their mites, and some few men kneel within me only to recall a feud with their brother; and after they have gone to seek the matter's rightful resolution, they sometimes return and offer a fitting sacrifice. But whether I hold men singing loudly the tunes of self-congratulation, or humbly humming his praise, I am the church, and God calls you to me.

I am supposed to be the body of Christ, and quite often my oldest representatives still boast the burial ground, long since full, but neatly kept with invested capital. Occasionally one of my members rises to mystic heights and sees my unity in one body, and individuals blend into a parish; but for the most part, I am a disoriented, disjointed, disgruntled grouping of organizations, programs and people. When there is unanimity, someone insists we are individuals before God, and must not totally agree; and when there is tension and discord, someone boasts of our fellowship. Our feet are building folding doors in the vestry, while our hands are painting the sanctuary, as our legs are increasing the missionary budget, while our arms are putting loudspeakers in the tower, and our enemies are accusing our head of being in the clouds. But we are the church, and God calls you to us.

We are supposed to be the people of God. We certainly are people. We will assure you that you have arrived in a "real" situation full of practical problems, and physical situations in a contemporary, existential, pragmatic endeavor. We think we are contemporary because our bulletin service is in color, existential because our bean suppers draw such crowds of strangers, and pragmatic because the city has laid a new sidewalk outside the front entrance free of charge. You will note quickly that we certainly are people. We are ruled by all sorts of animal drives and hungers. Our consciences are reduced to a pliable putty build-it yourself kit. Our souls are kept tightly wrapped within the band of our Sunday hat — you know, in among the flowers! — where they can sentimentally drop a tear if the minister says "Jesus" in just the right tone. We are proud to be counted as belonging to God, and after we force through this next deal, or after that dream house is built, or Jimmie is through college, or the Lion's Club drive is over, or the spring planting is done — then He can have his way with us; but not now: we are too busy. Besides I guess God doesn't mind being ours for awhile; otherwise he might complain more. Did you hear thunder just now? Yes, we are the people, and the people are the church, and God calls you to us.

That is unless you say or do a certain thing. "Close our caskets? No more tons of flowers? No more 'Crossing the Bar'? No more rose water? Impossible! This lad has got to go!" "Yes, of course, we know he's a bookie, but he's such a good man. Why he helped a lot of poor people last year. Look, Pastor, if you are going to accuse us of separating morality and goodness maybe you'd better leave." "No, sir! The plaque should have been unveiled by the daughter of an old-line family. Why, I didn't even know this upstart with her mother's dyed hair, and her father's divorce, her coarse language and her insulting walk. I was never so infuriated, and to think that it was in my very own church. I don't care if she *is* a member, she has no right to usurp our position." "I just hear, Brother, that you wrote a letter to the editor about . . . What are you trying to do, ruin the name of First Church?" "Heifers to Turkey? What's wrong with the good old U.S.A.?" With such greetings we will confront you and you will realize the honeymoon is over. But we are the church and God calls you to us.

I am need, ninety years old, rocking by the window, with only bitter memories of a lost generation; two days old, and gasping for the breath of life as my anxious parents press incubator-close; ten married years old, and cross-starred, mismated, grumblingly growing apart. I am suffering and I will call you at two o'clock in the morning — drag you from a family celebration, coerce you from sermon writing, plague you on the phone, and plead with you over the back fence. I am woe, seated head down at the center for delinquent children, slouching cocky at the visiting chamber in prison, and stumbling numbly down the dim corridor of the mental hospital. I will tell you how much I require your ministry by insulting you, threatening you, swearing at you, sobbing before you, laughing at you, running from you. I will treat your nondirection as the token of an idiot, your quiet intelligence as judgment, and your "tell me about it" as the babbling of a moron. But I am the church and God calls you to me.

I am good and bad; discouragement and hope; disgust and praise. All my tragedy is blended with victory, my crudeness is mixed with sophistication; and my loneliness is permeated with fellowship. In my every death there is life; in my every darkness there shines light; and no matter how man-made I appear, God still dwells within me. Many ignore me, but I am an undeniable fact. While my own wounds are never healed, I mediate God's reconciliation to an estranged world. Because of my weakness, I am a strength for men. I am far from perfect, but service to me makes a million men better each day. For I am the church and God calls you to me.

You are already in my service, and you begin to comprehend what loyalty I demand. I require every ounce of vitality you have, and I will use your every day off, hobby, or play to build up a spiritual reserve — which I will lecherously demand of you again. I will cause you to pray in public, and force you to your knees in private. I will demand that you be married, and allow you little family life. I will call you rich, but keep you poor. I will disturb your every dream of personal gain, and inspire your every despair at personal loss. I will keep you in hell, but allow men to think of you in heaven. I will ordain you a leader, but require you as a servant. Come to me with your eyes open, for only the honest can stand in such rigor. Come to me with your arms outstretched, for my people need to be carried. Come to me running, for your consecration to me will burn every bridge of retreat. Give me your life and I will give you a cross to bear, but the strength to rise up and bear it daily. Come to me for I am the church, and God calls you.

Thoughts on Preaching

(From the Journals of Soren Kierkegaard*)

✚ The difference between a *Christian Address* and a *Sermon*. A Christian Address deals to a certain extent with doubt. A Sermon operates absolutely and entirely through authority, that of Holy Writ and of Christ's apostles. It is therefore neither more nor less than heresy to entertain doubt in a sermon, however well one might be able to handle it. A Sermon presupposes a priest (ordination); a Christian Address can be by a layman.

✚ My whole being is changed. My reserve and self-isolation is broken — I must speak.

✚ His sermons are quite good — but in eternity he will not have to preach — but be judged. [Referring to Bishop Mynster]

✚ As long as the clergy were exalted, sacrosanct in the eyes of men, Christianity continued to be preached in all its severity. For even if the clergy did not take it too strictly, people dared not argue with the clergy, and they could quite well lay on the burden and dare to be severe. But gradually, as the nimbus faded away, the clergy got into the position of themselves being controlled. So there was nothing to do but to water down Christianity. And so they continued to water it down till in the end they achieved perfect conformity with an ordinary worldly run of ideas — which were proclaimed as Christianity.

✚ *Parson:* Thou shalt die unto the world. — The fee is one guinea.

Neophyte: Well, if I must die unto the world I quite understand that I shall have to fork out more than one guinea; but just one question: Who gets the guinea?

Parson: Naturally I get it, it is my living, for I and my family have to live by preaching that one must die unto the world. It is really very cheap, and soon we shall have to ask for considerably more. If you are reasonable you will easily understand that to preach that one must die unto the world, if it is done seriously and with zeal, takes a lot out of a man. And so I really have to spend the summer in the country with my family to get some recreation.

✚ Grundtvig came before the world with his probational sermon: Why is the word of God gone from the House of God? I could never say a thing like that. I should have to say: Why has the power gone from the preaching of the word of God?

* S. Kierkegaard, *The Journals of Kierkegaard* (New York: Harper Torchbook TB/52). Used by permission.

The Minister as Preacher

By John E. Skoglund

THERE is only one way out: the sound of a voice coming from something not ourselves, in the existence of which we cannot believe. It is the earthly task of the pastors to hear this voice, to relate it convincingly to the contemporary scene, and to tell us what it says. If they cannot hear it, or if they fail to tell us, we as laymen are utterly lost. Without it we are no more capable of saving the world than we were of creating it in the first place."[1] This startling cry of despair was written before Pearl Harbor, before Hiroshima, before man knew the desperate potential of his own inventiveness. But the appeal is no less compelling. Amidst the confusing din of his world, man is straining to hear that voice which can bring to him the words of life. Those words of life are the words of the gospel as they strike the ear of men through the ministry of preaching. This places preaching in a place of primary significance in the life of the church and the community. It places upon the preacher the heavy responsibility to gain for himself that insight into the meaning and function of preaching which will enable him to preach with powerful effectiveness in the face of a dying world. In this task the seminaries can have no small part. For in large measure the philosophy of preaching which is current in the minds of the ministers is that philosophy which was given to them in the classrooms of their theological schools. It is the purpose of this paper to make some suggestions relative to this problem.

At the beginning it is well to say that we are not here primarily concerned with the techniques of preaching. Effective methods of gathering and organizing materials, persuasive language, and pulpit speech and manner are exceedingly important, but they are not primary. The basic factor in preaching is the preaching itself, that is, the message that is delivered. Jonathan Edwards bending over his small lettered manuscript, reading in a voice that was monotonously dull, could move his congregation at Northampton so powerfully that in the words of one of them: "We must needs grasp firmly the pew beneath us in order to keep from leaping into the air." What then are some of the factors in the development of the philosophy of preaching designed to meet the desperate challenge of men who cry for "the sound of a voice coming from something not ourselves."

First, there is need for a revaluation of the significance of preaching. One of the best qualified spokesmen for a real philosophy of preaching has said: "If one were asked to indicate in the briefest possible way the most central and distinctive trend in contemporary theology one would be tempted to answer 'the rediscovery of the significance of preaching.'"[2] He goes on to indicate that this is only a trend, the effectiveness of which must be judged in the light of further developments. He is doubtless conscious of the immense amount of so-called preaching and the almost negligible effectiveness of it. A casual perusal of the church ads in a metropolitan daily will indicate the ends to which ministers will go in their pursuit of flimsy homiletical phantoms. In their attempt to make their public ministry "attractive," "useful," and "contemporary," clergymen have frequently lost all touch with the basic message of the Christian faith. Preaching by becoming "topical" has even in some quarters divorced itself from the Bible. I was amazed one Sunday while visiting a Baptist church to hear the minister say: "This morning I am taking my text from the Koran." Another minister of my acquaintance who prides himself on his eclecticism frequently uses, as the substance of his message, portions of what he calls "the scriptures of the world." This may be good comparative religion, but

[1] Editorial, *Fortune*, January 1940. Used by permission.

[2] Herbert Henry Farmer, *The Servant of the Word* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons). Used by permission.

JOHN E. SKOGLUND *is Cornelius Woelfkin Professor of Preaching at Colgate Rochester Divinity School. A graduate of the University of California, he received both the M.A. and B.D. degrees from Berkeley Baptist Divinity School and took his doctorate, in theology and philosophy, at Yale University. Before joining the Colgate Rochester Divinity School faculty in 1958, Dr. Skoglund was pastor of the First Baptist Church, Seattle, Washington.*

"The Minister as Preacher" appeared in the June, 1960 issue of the Colgate Rochester Divinity School Bulletin *and is here reprinted by permission.*

Your Standard of Excellence since 1912

PULPIT ROBES

To be sure of your best appearance and long-lasting pleasure, insist on our hand-sewn, custom-tailored robes.

ROBES FOR YOUR CHOIR, TOO

Write for catalog D-41

BENTLEY & SIMON, Inc.
7 West 36 St. New York 18, N.Y.

based on the seven last words of Christ

by HOWARD G. HAGEMAN

In a tone, triumphant and joyful, the author has created a devotional book that is meant for both preacher and layman alike. He writes simply, freshly, effectively, making the hours on Calvary less of an abstraction and more of a contemporary reality. Illustrated with seven modern pen-and-ink sketches.

WE CALL THIS FRIDAY GOOD

$1.50 at all book stores

MUHLENBERG PRESS

PROVOCATIVE AND INFORMATIVE BOOKS FROM

Abingdon Press

The Shape of Death

By JAROSLAV PELIKAN

Drawing upon the thought of five church fathers from the second and third centuries — Tatian, Clement of Alexandria, Cyprian, Origen, and Irenaeus — this book presents the message of the early church concerning life and death. Each chapter explains and gives a brief critique of the concept of one man, which is symbolized by a geometrical figure. In dealing with each concept, Dr. Pelikan shows the clash of biblical and Greek elements in the early church's theology of death. In his conclusion, he adds his own shape of death. *$2.25*

Can I Know God?

By W. E. SANGSTER

17 stimulating sermons by one of the greatest preachers of our time, directed to the spiritual needs of people in our modern world, and selected for their comprehensive and vigorous approach to a vital relationship with God, our fellow man, and ourselves. Dr. Sangster applies unique ideas to Christian ethics, urging us to forget the things that would lend injury in remembering, to cultivate as Christians a happy countenance that will attract others to Christianity, to set an example instead of making accusations, and never to pass up the opportunity to witness for Christ. *$2.75*

Never Forget to Live

By HALFORD E. LUCCOCK

Inspiring thoughts and words of encouragement for every day of the year may be found in these meditations rich in fine Luccock illustrations. *$2*

Questions God Asks

By HUNTER BECKELHYMER

13 stimulating sermons based on biblical questions, — some from the Old Testament, some from the conversations of Jesus in the New Testament. *$2.50*

APEX Paperback BOOKS — New Issues

The Theology of the Old Testament

By OTTO J. BAAB. "An important contribution to present thinking about biblical problems, as much by its implications as by its arguments." — *Chicago Theological Seminary Register.* *$1.50*

The Beginning of Christianity

By CLARENCE TUCKER CRAIG. "A degree of acumen in weighing and interpreting historical data, and a depth of conviction . . . make this the most exciting book on early Christianity that has come this way for years." — *Christian Century.* *$1.75*

The Counselor in Counseling

By SEWARD HILTNER. "First aid to pastors who have discovered their responsibility for giving personal counseling and who do not quite know how to go about it." — *Christian Century.* *$1.25*

John Wesley

By FRANCIS J. McCONNELL. "A surprisingly fresh view of the founder of The Methodist Church." — *Journal of Bible and Religion.* *$1.75*

Why Do Men Suffer?

By LESLIE D. WEATHERHEAD. "Every man and woman should read it in seeking a sensible approach to . . . life. . . ." — *The Lutheran.* *$1.25*

Making Prayer Real

By LYNN J. RADCLIFFE. "A book for the prayerful person seeking an increasingly rich experience in prayer . . . the reading is a rewarding excursion." — *Chicago Theological Seminary Register.* *$1.25*

A Theology for the Social Gospel

By WALTER RAUSCHENBUSCH. "A restatement of theological doctrines in terms of social consciousness." — Dores R. Sharpe in *Walter Rauschenbusch.* "His pioneering venture in theological reconstruction." —Justin Wroe Nixon in *Christendom.* *$1.75*

Papa Was a Preacher

By ALYENE PORTER. "Here is a record of a large family abounding with goodness of spirit and humor and rambunctious living." — J. C. Agnew in *N.Y. Times.* *$1*

Order from your bookstore today

Abingdon Press . . . **Publisher of THE INTERPRETER'S BIBLE**

THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON ANNUAL, 1961

For every Lesson in 1961 you get the text in both KJ and RSV; explanation and application of the text, summary of each lesson, many teaching aids. *440 pages*

STILL ONLY $2.95 AT YOUR BOOKSTORE

Abingdon Press

it is not preaching the Christian gospel. Under the guise of preaching, the church laity must listen to commentaries upon almost everything under the sun. They hunger and thirst for truth concerning the living God and their own condition as they stand before that God. Yet how often only a few incidental crumbs fall their way. They go away hungry. One wonders why they ever come back.

I

Doubtless the seminaries and other schools concerned with the training of Christian leaders have been largely at fault in the training which they have given. Many a graduate of a theological school has been well equipped to organize and administer a church according to the latest management study, or to guide in the social life of the church, or to become a first citizen of the community, or to lead worship which is moodfully uplifting, or to perform marriage ceremonies with decorum and beauty, or even to give a critical commentary of some of the more difficult sections of the Book of Romans or the letter to the Hebrews, or to write an able paper on *"Kairos* in the Thought of Paul Tillich," yet he has utterly failed in the most important task of his ministry, that of building into the laity of his church firm and true convictions concerning God's self-revelation to man. The seminary has often concerned itself in making "successful ministers" in the professional sense, rather than giving to its students those basic convictions concerning the task of the ministry and the truth which is to be proclaimed. While many of the Bible schools have not been so much interested in the practical polish of the preacher, they too have not fully succeeded in giving to their graduates an adequate understanding of the faith. Graduates of these schools can generally quote with considerable facility lengthy sections of scripture and outline with a good deal of ease beliefs concerning the general points of a systematic theology, yet there often seems to be a superficiality about it. They seem to be repeating by rote, and seeking to instill by rote in the minds of their listeners the general outline of some course that they took from Professor So-and-So in the Bible School rather than giving the fundamental and basic convictions of the faith learned from face to face confrontation with the divine word.

In the face of all this the "new trend" is moving forward. In the writings of such men as Herbert Farmer, James Stewart, C. H. Dodd,

New Westminster Books

Westminster Guides to the Bible

SERVANTS OF THE WORD:
The Prophets of Israel
By JAMES D. SMART. A brief but comprehensive survey of the Old Testament prophets. $1.50

THE CHURCH FACES THE WORLD:
Late New Testament Writings
By J. CHRISTIAAN BEKER. A study of the last-written books of the New Testament, with a vivid picture of the early church. $1.50

BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY:
Abridged Edition
By G. ERNEST WRIGHT. A condensed version of Dr. Wright's definitive *Biblical Archaeology*—brought up to date to keep pace with current developments.
paperbound, $1.65

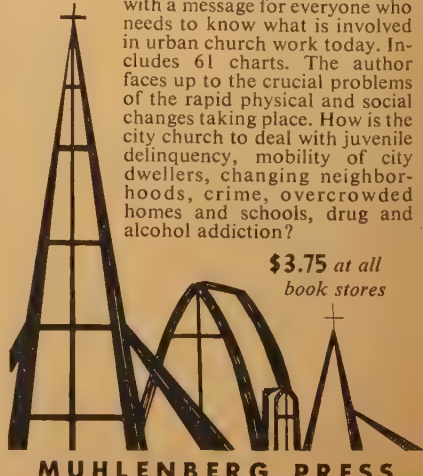
THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT
By WILLIAM BARCLAY. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the Bible and in life today. $2.50

ANTHEMS FOR THE ADULT CHOIR
Edited by W. LAWRENCE CURRY. Designed for small-church choirs, primarily, but useful for large city churches as well. $1.10 (for 1 to 4 copies)
$ .90 (5 or more copies)

Now at your bookstore
WESTMINSTER PRESS, Philadelphia 7

THE CITY CHURCH
Death or Renewal
A STUDY OF 8 URBAN PARISHES
by Walter Kloetzli,
author of **Urban Church Planning**

Down-to-earth, understandable to laymen and pastors alike, this is a book with a message for everyone who needs to know what is involved in urban church work today. Includes 61 charts. The author faces up to the crucial problems of the rapid physical and social changes taking place. How is the city church to deal with juvenile delinquency, mobility of city dwellers, changing neighborhoods, crime, overcrowded homes and schools, drug and alcohol addiction?



$3.75 *at all book stores*

MUHLENBERG PRESS

The Epistles of St. Paul and the Parish Paper Today

The Surest Method of Getting Your Message "Home" to Every Member of Your Congregation

From the very beginning of Christianity the early Fathers realized that they must make use of every help available to spread the message of their beloved Master. While filled with ardor, they were but a mere handful of men and could not hope to visit all the cities of the world and preach the Gospel.

Saint Paul did much to solve their problem by writing his epistles to the various congregations. These letters were copied and sent to other churches — they were read again and again.

While the pastor of today does not have to cover so much territory, he is beset with other difficulties. He must carry on the business management of his church, cheer the sick, call on members and prospective members, and take part in all social and spiritual activities.

The average pastor realizes he needs help. Here is where the Parish Paper enters. With this help, the busy pastor can talk to every member of his flock in his own home — can tell of the work being done, stress the needs of the parish and strengthen the ties of Christian fellowship.

A Parish Paper increases church attendance; attracts and holds people; widens the sphere of influence for church and pastor; saves time for the minister; and adds to the church finances.

FOR SAMPLES, PRICES AND FULL PARTICULARS REGARDING OUR SERVICE AND THE HELPFUL SIXTEEN-PAGE ILLUSTRATED PARISH MANUAL CONTAINING DETAILED EXPLANATION OF PUBLISHING PROCEDURE, FILL OUT AND MAIL THE COUPON.

Do it NOW. No obligation, of course.

USE THIS COUPON

Please send The Parish Paper Manual, sample parish papers, and full particulars regarding your Standardized Service.

Name .....

Street .....

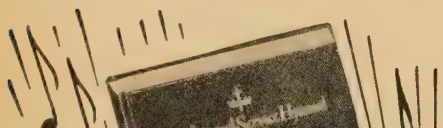
City ..... State .....
TP

The National Religious Press
523 Ottawa Ave.
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

DON'T *MISS* TRYING *THIS!*

Worship and Service Hymnal

CONTAINS THE WORLD'S MOST TREASURED HYMNS AND SONGS



Your Choice of Binding Colors: Cathedral Red or Chapel Green

FREE Sample Yours

Worship and Service Hymnal lifts the heart and soul on wings of song. Send TODAY for Free Sample Copy. See, test and prove its amazing quality. Nothing like it. Not just another hymnal but for the first time a combination in one book of traditional and gospel hymnody covering every subject and meeting every need.

24-KARAT GOLD TITLE

Real gold that will never tarnish. Contains 543 'singable' musical numbers each contributing to fuller and more fervent congregational participation. Abundant choir and special numbers; complete indexes; 73 appropriate Scripture readings. Surprising low price. Don't miss the blessing of this supreme new hymnal.

NOW

We want to see, test and prove Worship and Service Hymnal. Please send free sample copy.

Name _____ (Please Print)

Address _____

City _____ *Zone* ____ *State* _____

I am ☐ *Pastor* ☐ *Supt., or* _____

Church and Denom. _____

HOPE Publishing Co.

5737-A1 West Lake Street, Chicago 44, Illinois

Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, Donald G. Miller and John Knox, one senses the "rediscovery of the significance of preaching."

These men go back to the New Testament to discover what preaching meant in the apostolic church. In the world of the first century, the preacher was a servant of the king, a herald, who came into the public square. He had two primary functions: (1) to announce the imminent arrival of the king, and (2) to bring a message from the king. This twofold meaning was doubtless in the mind of the New Testament church when it chose the word *kerux* as one of the functional titles for its ministers. For the preacher in the early church was, first, one who announced the advent of the king: Christ had come, was now present in the Spirit, and was coming again in power and glory to establish his kingdom, and secondly, one who bore a message of the good news of salvation to all who would believe.

From this background, preaching is seen as the proclamation of the word of God: The Living Word, the King Himself, and the written word, His message. Or to state the matter somewhat differently, preaching is bearing witness to an Event, an Event which involves a Person and has a Content. In fact preaching is itself a part of the Event, for the true preaching situation is the Event made real again. As the historical Event is being borne witness to, it becomes contemporary. That which is covered over by the folds of history suddenly breaks forth into the most real contemporaneousness. For in the moment of real preaching there is not only the personal encounter of the preacher with the Word of Life, but the words of his preaching become the media whereby the Word is carried personally to the hearer, and he for himself enters into a sense of the real presence of God in his heart. "Preaching is that divine saving activity in history, which began two thousand years ago in the advent of Christ and in His personal relationships with men and women, and has continued throughout the ages in the sphere of redeemed personal relationships (which is the true Church), now focusing on men, confronting men, as a person indissolubly bound up with other persons at this present time. It is God actively probing me, challenging my will, calling on me for decision, offering me His succor, through the only medium which the nature of his purpose permits Him to use, the medium of a personal relationship. It is, to adapt the apostle's words, 'God did beseech me by you.' It is God's 'I-Thou' relationship with me carried on through your 'I-Thou' relationship with me, both together coming out of the heart of His saving purpose which is moving on through history to its consummation in His kingdom. . . . Preaching is the preacher's activity; yet it is only distinctively preaching in so far as it is uttered and listened to in faith . . . It is God's activity, that is, God encountering human souls in what may at any moment prove to be the supreme crisis of their lives."[3]

To such a task the preacher must devote himself with fear and trembling. No man can accomplish it adequately, but by the grace of God the feeblest of human words can be given a divine glow which can carry them to the heart of the hearer with eternal meaning. Into the teaching of our seminaries must come a renewed sense of the real meaning of the basic task of the preacher, that of the proclamation of the Word of God.

II

Secondly, there is need to rediscover the significance of theology in relationship to preaching. In 1877 Phillips Brooks said to the theological students at Yale University, "The preachers that have moved and held men have always preached doctrine. No exhortation to a good life that does not put behind it a truth as deep as eternity can seize and hold the conscience. Preach doctrine, preach all the doctrine you know, and learn forever more and more, but preach it always, not that men may believe it, but that they may be saved by believing it."

A modern social prophet, Norman Thomas, has echoed the same thought. "I do not think that the church, at any rate the Christian Church, has any particular significance for society except as it has something fundamental to say, about metaphysics, or more concretely, theology. For the minister a social consciousness and some humanitarian enthusiasm are no substitutes for a living message about a God in whose love and power he has found not only his own peace but also his ground for hope and for the victory of the Kingdom of God and the peace of all mankind."

It is clear that preaching and theology are intimately related. Preaching is the public proclamation of the Word of God. Theology is the attempt to state clearly the meaning of the Word of God. Too often this has become by speculative methods an aridly dry pursuit suited only to the dusty atmosphere of ancient cloister, but of late theology has been brought out to the light of day. A noted university president has urged that it once again be fixed firmly into the center of the university curriculum as the queen of the sciences. In the area of practical Christianity, theology has been moving down from the balcony into the road. It has become concerned with man's existence in relation to God as a problem of daily living. It has been discovered that theology does not center in the study rooms of theological professors, but in the life of the church. The heart of the church is the gospel. That which

[3] *Ibid.*

theology seeks to express is the inner meaning of the gospel in its relationship to life. Karl Barth has said, "Theology is not a private subject for theologians only. Nor is it a private subject for professors. Fortunately there have always been pastors who have understood more about theology than most professors. Nor is theology a private subject for pastors. Fortunately there have been congregation members and often whole congregations, who have pursued theology energetically while their pastors were theological infants or barbarians. Theology is a matter for the Church."[4]

Thus the pastor who is also a theologian studies, thinks, and moves among his people, seeing their needs and longings. With this complex of experience he falls upon his knees. That which he has gathered as the content of his mind and the burden of his heart is placed before God. There is a personal meeting, an encounter, an interchange. Out of this comes his message as preacher. It is a message concerning God, yet it has its center in the lives of those to whom the preacher ministers. It is his high privilege to bring to them the highest of reality to meet the deepest of their needs. Such a message is profoundly theological. For it reveals to men their own condition as they stand before God. Such a message is something that will make a difference. For it will build into the experience of men true knowledge concerning divine reality that will bring enduring stability and the strength to endure in the face of a terrifying world. This was borne out in World War II. Those churches and men in Europe which had been most theologically conscious prior to the war were those who resisted most valiantly the forces of tyranny.

More and more must our seminaries realize that the study of the theology is something more than a game of chess with religious pieces to be moved about upon the mental boards of tyro theologians. Theology is serious business. It deals with the basic reality of existence and cannot be handled lightly. Theologians must come to the place of Fra Angelico who painted his devoutly religious paintings while on his knees.

III

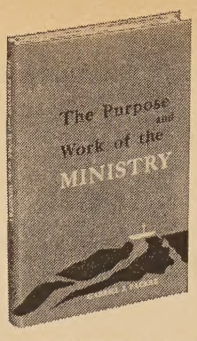
Thirdly, there is need to reintroduce the biblical element in preaching. Topical preaching in many areas all but lost any connection with the Bible. Except for an occasional text, which more often than not was appended for decorative purposes, and an occasional verse sprinkled in to satisfy the more "old fashioned" members of the congregation, the Bible was practically abandoned. Psychiatry, economics, politics, and a whole hodgepodge of current clutter replaced the Bible. In our sophistication we asked, what meaning did the story of a rather naive people in a simple culture have for our complex civilization? The culmination of this movement came with the frank recognition of its bankruptcy. Some called for "a moratorium on preaching" until the preachers had something to say. In the seminaries there was a frantic hurrying for something to stop the gap. The discovery was made that the Bible was more than the "story of a rather naive people in a simple culture," that, even though it was written in an age radically different from ours, in that story eternal acts were to be discovered whose meaning was not confined to one culture, but could be applied to all cultures.

Thus came the modern revival of biblical theology. In Germany, Switzerland, Britain and later in America, books began to roll from the presses which in one form or another sought to set forth the great themes of the Bible. Once again expressions such as "expository preaching," "biblical preaching," "textual preaching" began to take on meaning. Men found that in the Bible light could be found for the present darkness.

IV

In conclusion, the task of theological education is the preparation of ministers who can adequately minister in the present world situation. A primary function of these ministers will be preaching. If their preaching is to meet the unprecedented challenges of the day, it must take cognizance of these three factors which have been discussed, the whole philosophy of preaching must be restudied to once again rediscover the meaning of preaching as the proclamation of the Word of God, the content of the Christian faith must be clearly expressed; and the Bible must once again be put back into the center of the public proclamation of the gospel. Fundamentally, this is a task for the seminaries. This may mean reorganization of courses in Bible, theology, and homiletics to seek to make the contents of these courses more applicable to the major task of the minister. The theological courses will be less theoretical and more practical. The practical courses will be more theological and less of the "how to do it." Both will deal less with critical problems and more with positive message. They will give to the student a more exalted view of his task and a greater humility in his preparation to meet the demands of the task. And finally, they will give to the theological teacher a closer and more intimate contact with the life of the Church. His primary concern will be to lead the student into those experiences of study which will bear relevantly upon the life of men and women as they are in their daily lives facing the tremendous problems and opportunities of a space age.

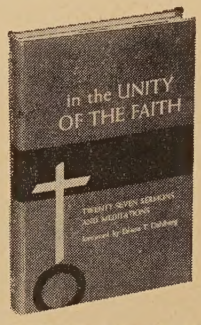
[4] Karl Barth, *God in Action* (New York: Round Table Press, Inc., 1936).



THE PURPOSE AND WORK OF THE MINISTRY

Gabriel J. Fackre

A dynamic young mission pastor writes vividly of the many roles that must be the minister's, chiefly as spiritual leader, but also as administrator, organizer, educator, and counselor. **$2.50**



IN THE UNITY OF THE FAITH

Foreword by Edwin T. Dahlberg

A galaxy of extraordinary sermons by the representatives of 27 denominations — from Eastern Orthodox to the Society of Friends. **$3.00**

THIS HOLY ESTATE

Herbert F. Reichert

A handbook on premarital counseling based on the *Order for Marriage.* **$1.00**

at bookstores

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION PRESS Philadelphia

IS FAMILY INSURANCE for you?

by Andrew Hobart
President,
Ministers Life & Casualty Union

Family insurance is becoming increasingly popular. In the past it was felt that only the head of the household should be insured, mainly because of the cost involved. Today plans have been developed that provide low cost protection for every member of the family.

Here are some points to keep in mind about family insurance . . . .

It's Sound! If the bulk of the policy is where it belongs—on the father.

It's Economical! Because there is only one policy and one premium, administrative costs are reduced. The saving is passed on to you.

It's Automatic! In most cases new additions to the family are covered when they become 15 days old.

It's Guaranteed Protection! Your children and your wife will be able to convert their term insurance to some form of permanent insurance at a later date without proof of insurability.

Family insurance is issued either as a single policy or as a rider to a base policy. Policies are also available to serve as starters for children's insurance programs.

It should be kept in mind that family policies should *not* be replacements for basic life insurance on the head of the household. Rather they should be used as supplements to assure well-rounded protection.

Write Ministers Life for information on the Family-Life policy and the Family Circle rider to protect your family's future.

ML SINCE 1900

MINISTERS LIFE and casualty union
3100 west lake st. • minneapolis 16, minn.

Book Reviews

PRACTICAL RELIGION. *By John Charles Ryle. Thomas Y. Crowell. $1.50.*

I CONFESS that this book had two strikes against it with this reviewer. First, I tend to view with alarm any more attempts to "make religion practical." We have far too many of these do-it-yourself-in-ten-easy-lessons approaches to the demanding reality of Christ's gospel. Secondly, I would think such a book dated so long ago and far away as Bishop Ryle's 19th century would have little to offer our "enlightened age."

But how wrong can you be? This book is a delight to have in such a time as this. It calls to us, in language quaint at times but always stately and compelling, to examine our faith, to get beyond the do-it-yourself stage, and to understand the high privilege and responsibilities that are ours as maturing children of God.

The one chapter on "Happiness" is worth the cost of the book in time and money. Written before much of our modern pseudo-psychiatric jargon befuddled our gospel, it strides with keen insight into our human need. Read it — for a home run! — *William O. Byrd, First Methodist Church, New Orleans, La.*

THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF NEW TESTAMENT PREACHING. *By Robert H. Mounce. Eerdmans. $3.50.*

THIS book must be read with C. H. Dodd's earlier book on the same theme in mind (*The Apostolic Preaching and Its Development,* first printed in 1936). Dr. Mounce time and again refers to Dodd's work and gives an important section to a description of his differences with Dr. Dodd.

Robert H. Mounce is associate professor and chairman of the department of Christianity at Bethel College and Seminary. It is commendable that he has responded to Dodd's generation-old request for discussion of this fundamental subject. In the foreword, A. M. Hunter of King's College, Aberdeen [the University of Aberdeen, Scotland conferred the Ph. D. on Robert Mounce] points up the issues between Mounce and Dodd. Hunter writes, "[Mounce] believes that Dr. Dodd drew too sharp a picture between *kerygma* and *didache.*" When we turn to Dr. Mounce's discussion, as on page 41, we find first Dodd's definition of *kerygma,* "the public proclamation of Christianity to the non-Christian world," and the *didache,* "ethical instruction," called into question. Mounce refers to the synoptic accounts of Jesus "teaching in the synagogues" (Matthew 4:23) and his "preaching" (Mark 1:39, Luke 4:44). Then Dr. Mounce turns to Jesus' Capernaum teaching (Mark 1:21, 22, 27). But a careful reading of this biblical text points up the words, "as one who had authority . . . a new teaching!"

Basing his argument on the use of the word *teaching* Mounce somewhat dulls his own argument. Dodd's chief ally is the careful definition of what he means by kerygma and what is meant by didache. "A new teaching" is as likely to be kerygma as not. In short, Dodd's distinction, while arbitrary, is most helpful. The professor from St. Paul might have spent his energies following through on Dodd's suggestions ("there is room for a good deal of investigation at every point [of these lectures]," p. 75, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Development*) rather than scrambling up the helpful distinctions. For Dodd's efforts are "distinctions" but the question remains, which approach helps us best understand the intent of the gospel recorders. I personally conclude that Dodd is more helpful.

Mounce further draws a distinction between "God's mighty act of redemption" and the New Age, the kingly rule of God. He writes, "In the speeches in Acts, it is Christ who is the subject of prophecy — not the age he inaugurates. . . . To say this is not to deny that the Messianic Age did, in fact, come in that cluster of historical events that centered in Jesus of Nazareth. . . . It is only to say that the primitive church in its evangelistic ministry was much more concerned with proclaiming God's mighty act of redemption than in drawing out its dispensational implications" (p. 86). One hastens to ask, "Was the New Age only an implication?" It might be wise to hold the question open for further discussion. Is Acts 3, for example, only concerned with "the proclamation of Christ, not the New Age"?

In all fairness to his own evident capabilities as a scholar one caution might be directed to the author. He needs to exercise a rigid discipline in his use of quotations. For example, a quotation on page 157 would seem to link Kraemer with Bultmann. Mounce states: "Hendrik Kraemer, for example, writes that the Bible is 'unintelligible,' the *kerygma* 'incomprehensible' and the great key ideas of the Christian faith are 'undecipherable hieroglyphs.' This can hardly be. As Stewart pointedly says, 'Much of the talk one hears about the incomprehensibleness of the vocabulary of religion to the man in the street is . . . a slur upon the average man's intelligence.' All such approaches to the problem of communication invariably issue in a plea for the translation of archaic terminology and the modernization of antiquated modes of thought." At the end of this quote from Mounce, this footnote by

Mounce: "Bultmann's school of 'demythologizing' is the outstanding example of the latter." Without any further comment from the author, the uninitiated reader might easily assume that Kraemer and Bultmann are villains cut from the same cloth. Actually, if we take time to look up the pages from which Dr. Mounce has quoted in Hendrik Kraemer's *The Communication of the Christian Faith* we find that Kraemer explicitly states his difference with Bultmann. Kraemer is as much opposed to Bultmann as Mounce seems to be. The use of these quotes is patently unfair to Kraemer's intent.

The rejoinders by the reviewer should indicate that Dr. Mounce has written a lively book certain to generate discussion. Readers familiar with Dodd's earlier work will want to weigh Dr. Mounce's argument carefully. They may find greater agreement than this reader. The closing chapter on "The Essential Nature of Preaching" is itself worth the cost of the book. It is an excellent treatment of this important responsibility. This chapter deserves a wide readership. — *Joseph D. Ban, Westfield, N. J.*

Pulpit Calendar

Jan. 1 — New Year's Day.
Jan. 1-8 — Universal Week of Prayer.
Jan. 5 — Epiphany Eve.
Jan. 6 — Epiphany. Twelfth Night.
Jan. 8 — 1st Sunday after Epiphany.
Jan. 15 — Missionary Day.
Jan. 15-21 — Church & Economic Life Week.
Jan. 22 — 3rd Sunday after Epiphany.
Jan. 29 — 4th Sunday after Epiphany.
Jan. 29 – Feb. 5 — Youth Week.
Feb. 2 — Presentation of Jesus in the Temple.
Feb. 5 — 5th Sunday after Epiphany.
Feb. 12 — Race Relations Sunday.
Feb. 15 — Ash Wednesday.
Feb. 17 — World Day of Prayer.
Feb. 19 — Universal Day of Prayer for Students. 1st Sunday in Lent.
Feb. 19-26 — Brotherhood Week.
Feb. 26 — 2nd Sunday in Lent.
Mar. 5 — 3rd Sunday in Lent.
Mar. 12 — 4th Sunday in Lent.
Mar. 19 — Passion Sunday.
Mar. 25 — The Annunciation.
Mar. 26 – Apr. 1 — Holy Week.
Mar. 26 — Palm Sunday.
Mar. 30 — Maundy Thursday.
Mar. 31 — Good Friday.

THE TRADING POST

[You are invited to make free use of these sermon ideas, outlines, texts, thought primers, illustrations and quotations provided that for each one used you submit one of your own of equal quality and originality. Send all items for exchange to The Trading Post, The Pulpit, 407 S. Dearborn St., Chicago 5, Ill. Items accepted will be published with the name of the sender. — Ed.]

Thoughts for the first of the year:

Rev. Douglas E. Bradford of Toronto, Canada, writes that the Department of Arts and Monuments in Rome became concerned about the fact that the Colosseum is deteriorating more rapidly in recent years than heretofore. Investigation showed that the accelerated deterioration is due to the vibrations of heavy traffic along nearby streets. This is a parable. The tensions and pressures of modern life are more destructive of Christian character than the difficulties and trials of previous generations.

Rev. Ted Richardson of San Antonio, Texas, offers this quotation from *Death Came to Existentialism* by Viktor E. Frankl: "I remember two cases of 'would-be' suicide. Both used the typical argument — they had nothing to expect from life. In both cases it was a question of getting them to realize that life was still expecting something from them."

"Character is that which is found still standing when the crash is over. Character is the moral cash on hand when the creditors close in on life . . . Character is what you have been thinking and doing for a long time." — *From 'Real Living Takes Time,' by Hazen G. Werner* — Submitted by Mrs. A. W. Geigley, Fairfield, Pa.

"Society cannot be pulled down and rebuilt successfully. It must keep on growing out of its own roots; its vital processes can never be suspended." — *From 'Social Salvation,' by Washington Gladden.*

"Then said he unto them, 'Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.'" — Matthew 13:52.

It is the God who is the "Ancient of Days" who "maketh all things new."

The externalities of history are never repeated; the internalities of history never cease. There is a shuttle of memory and association, which moving back and forth, binds the past to the present.

One of the religious tragedies of our time is the systematic amnesia which robs men of their spiritual yesterday.

The past is a thief; the past is also a treasury. As the song goes, "They can't take that away from us . . . "

Dante may not mention it but somewhere in his inferno there must be a place for two camps of men, pushing against each other but forever immobilized. One camp shouts, "Away with the old!" and the other cries, "Down with the new!"

"Who does not answer to the rudder shall answer to the rock."
"The best revenge on your enemy is not to be like him." — Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch
"He who gazes long into the abysmal pits of life soon finds the pits looking back into his own." — Nietzsche

If you were an artist, in what colors would you paint faith, hope, love? Explain.

CHOIR ROBES
Newest colorfast fabrics available. Write for Catalog A48
E. R. MOORE CO.
268 Norman Ave., Brooklyn 22, N. Y.
932 Dakin St., Chicago 13, Ill.
1641 N. Allesandro St., Los Angeles 26, Calif.
1605 Boylston Ave., Seattle 22, Wash.

LUTHER'S WORKS

Two new volumes in this 56-volume translation of Martin Luther's writings.
General editors: Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann
VOL. 2—LECTURES ON GENESIS: Chapters 6-14
Translated by George V. Schick
One of the great works in the field of exegetical writing. The translator has succeeded admirably in reproducing the simplicity, directness and lucidity of Luther's language. $5.00
VOL. 35—WORD AND SACRAMENT I
Edited by E. Theodore Bachmann
Includes Luther's Reformation understandings of the sacraments, his view of the authority of God's Word and of the fundamental distinction within it between law and gospel, his view of the Scripture, and his grasp and evaluation of the various books of the Bible. $5.00
At all book stores
MUHLENBERG PRESS
CONCORDIA PUBLISHING HOUSE

The Harper Book for Lent, 1961

Heart in Pilgrimage

A Study in Christian Prayer

By REGINALD CANT

Chancellor and Canon of York Minster, England

To renew and strengthen the inner life – here is a compact, forceful guide to a practical life of prayer, intimately related to basic Christian beliefs.

With charm and clarity Dr. Cant examines the reasons for prayer, and shows techniques for more effective prayer. In considering the difficulties which confront the individual, the author further explores: Christian holiness, forgiveness and penitence, meditation and mental prayer, liturgical prayer, the responsibilities of the Christian, the sense of community.

"HEART IN PILGRIMAGE speaks directly to the condition of large numbers of men and women who are looking for some pattern of faith which will enable them to live with dignity and serenity in a confused and confusing world. For it is a grasp of the principles of Christian prayer, and an understanding of its practice, which is their need. Canon Cant here offers a splendid guide." – W. NORMAN PITTENGER $2.50

Christian Holiness

By STEPHEN NEILL

The dimension of life men call holy is explored in depth by Bishop Neill. Writing in clear and vivid style, he examines: *The Biblical Idea of Holiness; The Perfectionist Error; The Conformist Error; Conflict, and Temptation; What, Then, Do We Preach?* "Treats a great and neglected, aspect of Christ's truth, directly and intimately related to the life of both individuals and the Church . . . inspiring and illuminating." – HENRY PITNEY VAN DUSEN $3.00

Centuries

By THOMAS TRAHERNE (1637-1674)

With an Introduction by John Farrar

A treasury of meditations by the great English poet. These beautiful reflections are "among the greatest literary discoveries of all time . . . his book is a paean of reassurance, an assertion that the mercy of God is truly infinite. Besides this, the beauty of his prose is unparalleled." – *The Times Literary Supplement* (London) $3.50

A TESTAMENT OF DEVOTION

By THOMAS R. KELLY. "A beautiful blending of the mystical and practical . . . deals with some fundamentals of the Christian faith." – *Christian Advocate* $1.50

THANKS BE TO GOD

By ROBERT N. RODENMAYER. *The Harper Book for Lent, 1960.* "One of the best Harper Lenten books." – CHAD WALSH $2.50

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

By FRANCOIS FENELON. "The letters are among the most mature pieces of spiritual instruction that exist." – DOUGLAS STEERE $2.50

THE EMPTY TOMB

Letters from Caiaphas to Annas

By JAMES MARTIN. "To see Jesus' death and resurrection through the eyes of Caiaphas is to see them more vividly and in greater depth that before." – ALICE PARMELEE $2.50

STRENGTHENING THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

By NELS F. S. FERRE. "An authentic expression of the author's own spiritual life." – *Religious Book Club* $1.25

BEHOLD THE GLORY

By CHAD WALSH. "Reads like meditations from a mystic of the Middle Ages, brought up to date." – *Living Church* $2.50

At your bookseller

HARPER & BROTHERS, N. Y. 16